CANARY ISLAND HOPPING

The Azores/Madeira

A Handbook for the Independent Traveller

JUDITH HAYTER

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About the Author

Judith Hayter is the daughter of a Royal Navy officer. She spent much of her childhood living abroad – in Hong Kong, South Africa and Pakistan. She acquired a BA Honours degree in Spanish and Portuguese at London University and has spent a lot of time in those countries. She spent four months in 1973 in Spain organizing a natural history expedition.

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THE AZORES/MADEIRA

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JUDITH HAYTER

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PART I
THE CANARY ISLANDS

1 Introduction

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The Canaries have been a familiar name to travellers for hundreds of years, on the route from Western Europe south round Cape Horn to the Far East. They provided the discoverers of the New World with a last taste of home; they saw merchants and traders bustling back and forth to Africa, India and South America, and now they're on the tourist map. Gran Canaria and Tenerife are favourite holiday spots for North Europeans, yet many people forget that there are five other islands: La Palma, Hierro, Gomera, Fuerteventura and Lanzarote. Between them these seven islands provide such a variety of attractions – from snowy peaks to sun-baked beaches, great cities to tiny hamlets, sophistication to utter simplicity – that the visitor is spoiled for choice. Will it be Playa de las Américas, with sun and sand and shining white hotels? Or the university town of La Laguna, so dignified and assured of its place in history? Or the peaceful national park of Las Cañadas, high in the mountains? And all this in just one island.

What the Canaries have in common is an extraordinary volcanic beauty, a superb climate, and a continual stream of surprises – scenic, historical, geological, cultural. Though they are all part of Spain, some islands seem more like splinters from North Africa whereas others recall places as far apart as Scotland and tropical Central America. Gran Canaria is called 'a miniature continent', because of its diversity of landscapes and attractions, while Lanzarote looks like something on the moon.

This is the island-hoppers' paradise – so much to see, so easy to get there. If there's a problem, it's a sweet one: how to drag yourself away

The Canary Islands
A T L A N T I C O C E A N
18°W
16°W
14°W
29°N
28°N
LA PALMA
Santa Cruz de la Palma
TENERIFE
Santa Cruz de Tenerife
GOMERA
San Sebastian
HIERRO
Valverde
GRAN CANARIA
Las Palmas
LANZAROTE
Arrecife
FUERTEVENTURA
Puerto Rosario
N.W. AFRICA
km
mls
0
50
100
150

from one place to visit the next. No wonder Pliny called the Canaries 'the Fortunate Islands'.

Geography

The seven main islands and six minor ones lie off the north-west coast of Africa, forming a rough W shape in the Atlantic Ocean, 300 miles east to west. The nearest land is Cape Juby, westernmost tip of Morocco, while Spain is 600 miles to the north-west.

Origin. Clearly of volcanic origin, the Canary archipelago's formation is still the subject of hot debate among geologists. Were the islands once part of the African continent, or did they arise from submarine fissures through which the earth's molten core spewed out boiling magma? The latter theory is dominant, though some botanists and others dispute it, as we shall see below – anyway, it all happened some 30-40 million years ago.

The islands' volcanic nature is still very evident today. Periodic eruptions occur from the remaining active volcanoes, most recently in La Palma (1971), but usually with advance warning and few casualties. The cones and craters of volcanoes provide a characteristic feature of Canary landscape, with lava rivers spilling their petrified streams down to the sea, and subterranean heat most dramatically felt in the Fire Mountains of Lanzarote and now being utilized as geothermal power. But if this conjures up a picture of aridity and bleakness, nothing could be further from the truth.

Physical Features. The total area of the archipelago is 2,923 square miles, the largest island being Tenerife (795 sq m) and the smallest Hierro (107 sq m). Generally speaking – which is tricky when you're dealing with seven such different islands – the five westernmost islands are mountainous and green, while Lanzarote and Fuerteventura in the east have lesser peaks and share more in common with North Africa. The highest mountain in the Canaries, indeed in all of Spain, is Mount Teide in Tenerife (12,198 ft), the summit often snow-covered in winter. The islands all tend to have steep coastal cliffs in the north, the south coasts generally being more level; most of the best beaches are in the southern parts. The volcanic origins are everywhere to be seen: in the profusion of cones (Lanzarote for instance is called 'the island of 300 volcanoes'); in the *calderas* or craters, great saucers with mountainous walls, such as Tenerife's Las Cañadas and Gran Canaria's Caldera de Bandama; in the *malpaíses*, literally 'badlands', where grey or reddish lava streams have

solidified, such as the 125 sq m volcanic desert round Lanzarote's Montañas del Fuego.

Climate. Situated in mid Atlantic between Latitudes 29°37′ and 29°25′ North, the islands' climate is warm and mild with almost constant sunshine, relatively little rain and the steadying influence of ocean currents and breezes. 'Eternal Spring,' boast the tourist brochures and it's very nearly true. But there are local variations owing to the physical formation of the islands, and different parts of one island will have different microclimates. In Tenerife, for example, the north coasts have heavier rainfall than the south, while temperatures are obviously lower at the top of Mount Teide than down at sea level.

Bearing all this in mind, let's look at some averages. Mean temperatures tend to fall between 16°C (61°F) minimum in winter and 30°C (86°F) in summer. Rainfall is heaviest between November and January, while June to August are the dryest months. Humidity at sea level is generally a rather high 70%. Winds are predominantly north-westerly (*los alisios*, these winds are called) occasionally veering round to easterly when they bring hot air, dust haze and sometimes a plague of locusts from the neighbouring continent. Sea temperatures are a constant 19-20°C all year round, perfect for swimming or falling off windsurfing machines.

First-time visitors can spend all their holiday needing nothing warmer than a light jacket or evening stole, but a warm sweater or coat will prevent shivers among the mountain peaks.

Water. The Canaries have a serious water problem. There is not enough rain, and what little there is falls irregularly. Only La Palma and Gomera have rivers that flow all year round, and all the islands depend heavily on natural and artificial reservoirs aided by a network of *galerías* (subterranean channels) and wells. But the underground reserves – fresh water that has filtered through permeable rocks to collect in impermeable basins – are rapidly being emptied as demand increases from human consumption, animals and agriculture. Every year the level in the reserves drops, channels and wells have to be re-dug, and already fresh water is brought to the Canaries in ships. You can do your bit by heeding the notices in hotels which politely warn guests not to waste water.

Flora and Fauna. Thanks to both the climate and the physical formation of the islands, there is a fantastic variety of plant life in the Canaries. About 1,800 different species of plant grow wild here, roughly 1,000 being indigenous, the rest introduced by man. Some have been here since the late Tertiary Period – that's at least 5 million years ago – and botanists remark

on the similarity between plant life here and fossilized plants found in the Mediterranean region. This is what leads some theorists to suggest that the Canaries were once part of the African continent, before the sea level rose and separated these rocky outcrops from the mainland. But such an idea is seemingly contradicted by the fact that Madeira and the Azores have similar native flora, though not in quite the same profusion.

Among the unique indigenous vegetation is *el drago*, the dragon tree (*Dracaena draco*), a truly primitive-looking tree with twisted grey sausage-like branches bearing a tight canopy of spiky leaves; the red sap of the tree, like 'dragon's blood', earned the tree its name and its place in ancient superstitions. One of the best specimens is at Icod de los Viños in Tenerife.

The vegetation changes according to altitude and orientation: northern parts of the islands tend to be much greener, watered by the moist *alisios* (north-westerlies), while southern coasts are apt to be dryer, sandier and less fertile. There are three main zones of vegetation, rising from sea level. Up to about 2,000 ft, extensive cultivation makes use of the richest agricultural land. The middle zone, between about 2,000 and 7,000 ft, is characterized by forests of pines (especially the native *Pinus canariensis*), eucalyptus, laurel, juniper and beech with a thick undergrowth of heather, myrtle and fragrant *retama* (like white broom), orchids, convolvulus and ferns. Still higher, the mountain summits are relatively bare, but even here there is colour from the lichens, the remarkable purple spikes (some well over 10 ft tall) of *tajinaste*, belonging to the viper's bugloss (*Echium*) family, and high up on Mount Teide is the dainty Teide violet (*Viola cheiranthifolia*), beautiful, solitary and very rare.

The eastern islands, Lanzarote and Fuerteventura, and the southern parts of Gran Canaria and Tenerife, closest to the African mainland, have a desert-like vegetation, scrubby, with lots of cacti and succulents. Most typical of these parts is the *Cardón*, a candelabre-shaped cactus belonging to the Euphorbia family – named after Euphorbus physician to King Juba II of Mauretania who sent an expedition to the Canaries in 30 BC.

Everywhere there are gardens and parks, full of exotic species from the Tropics and familar plants from Northern Europe, some of them so established and successful that they have become local 'trademarks', like the bird of paradise flower (strelitzia) and the poinsettia, which grows to almost tree-like proportions. Patios and roadsides, windowsills and street corners alike are ablaze with colour – scarlet geraniums, purple and orange bougainvillea, rosy hibiscus and camellias, night scented white datura, palm trees waving glossy green fronds . . . It's a feast for the eyes. (An excellent book on Canary Island flora is listed in the Bibliography.)

The islands' fauna is less abundant, but it too has some interesting evolutionary survivals, especially among the lizards, though the famous giant lizards of Hierro have died out, leaving only fossilized remains and smaller descendants (some 3 ft long). There are no poisonous snakes to worry about, only a few scorpions and mosquitoes. Rabbits, hares and feral goats were clearly originally introduced by man; the wild dogs that King Juba II's expedition found here have long since been assimilated in the domestic dog population, though some observers claim to see occa sional throwbacks.

Among the native bird species, the best known is of course the canary (*Serinus canaria*). The wild bird is not the 'canary yellow' colour we're accustomed to; it's a drab little finch with merely a touch of yellow on its underparts – and it was named after the islands, not the other way round. There are distinct sub-species of several other familiar birds, such as the sparrow, chiffchaff and grey wagtail, some varying even between the islands, like the blue tit, and once again Mount Teide has a unique species all of its own: the blue chaffinch (*Fringilla teydea*). Pigeons, partridges and quail apparently survive the annual shooting seasons to populate the forests and particularly the hills of Fuerteventura.

History

Even in the 20th century, the age of science, it's hard to ignore ancient myths and legends; the Canaries – like Madeira and the Azores – have a mysterious past which lets us half-believe in such fantastic stories as the Lost Continent of Atlantis. According to Plato in the 4th century BC, there was once a great island situated somewhere out in the Atlantic, a kind of paradise with a temperate climate, lofty mountains, lush vege tation and an abundance of all good things, which was swallowed up by the sea. He wrote in some detail in *Timaeus* and *Critias* of the inhabitants, animals and landscape of Atlantis, much of which seems to tally with these modern Atlantic Islands, and there are still people today who try to prove that Atlantis did exist (including Charles Berlitz; see Bibliography). Sceptics are often startled to hear of submerged archaeological remains discovered off the coasts of these islands; even at the time of writing, a team of Italian divers is exploring what appears to be an underwater town off Lanzarote's deep coastline.

But if you discard the Atlantis theory, there's not much recorded evidence of the Canaries until the Spaniards arrived in the 15th century. These may or may not be the islands that Homer referred to in the 18th century BC as 'the Elysian Fields', or that Herodotus (5th century BC)

called 'the Garden of the Hesperides'. All that can be said for sure is that the Canaries must have been known to sailors and merchants long before the Conquest. The Phoenicians, most famous of ancient navigators, had certainly discovered the islands during their colonizing expeditions to north-west Africa, and maybe even collected the islands' orchilla, a lichen used for purple dye. And as Thor Heyerdahl has proved, the Canary Current – a southerly flowing offshoot of the Gulf Stream – would have swept early adventurers south-west from Europe towards the Canaries, maybe even right across to Central and South America.

But the first written proof of the Canaries' existence is in Pliny's account of an expedition sent by King Juba II of Mauretania (which includes modern Morocco) in about 30 BC. Several islands are identifiable from Pliny's descriptions, notably 'Nivaria' (Tenerife), 'Junonia Minor' (Gomera) and 'Canaria, so called after its wild dogs of great size, of which two were sent to Juba' (*canis* being Latin for dog). Pliny seemed to think the archipelago was uninhabited at the time of Juba's expedition but when the Spaniards arrived 1400 years later they found a primitive people occupying the islands. How they got here and where they came from is one big mystery; it's exasperating, but there is virtually no record of those dark centuries. Mediterranean merchants – Genoese, Florentines, Mallorquins and Catalans – came in search of trading commodities towards the end of the 13th century, and we know that one Genoese, Lancelloto Malocello, landed on Lanzarote (which probably owes his name to him) between 1320 and 1339. By the second half of the 14th century, Spain was casting a greedy eye over the Canaries – and not just for the orchilla and other products of the fertile soil; they were also attracted by a potential source of slaves.

The Guanches: Strictly speaking, 'Guanche' refers only to the aboriginal inhabitants of Tenerife; in their language *guan* meant 'son of' and *Chinech* was their name for Tenerife. However, the term is loosely used of the natives of all the islands. What we know of them is very limited; the early Spanish *conquistadores* were concerned more with enslaving them and converting them to Christianity than with recording their culture. Contemporary chronicles give us a picture of a primitive neolithic people. In appearance they were tall, fair-skinned with fair or reddish hair and blue eyes, consistently described as good-looking; many later colonists married the Guanche women. Their spoken language bore no obvious similarities with any known language, and they had virtually no writings save some indecipherable stone inscriptions.

indecipherable stone inscriptions. They lived in caves or rough stone cairns; kept goats, pigs and dogs; ate meat, cereals, fruit, fish and cheese; wore plaited grass clothing or none at all; used stone or wooden implements (no metal). Most of the information we have about them derives from relatively recent archaeological research; although much remains to be done, it is clear at least that these were no savages. They had a strongly developed social system, based on a peaceful agricultural way of life, with laws, a belief in a supreme god and various minor deities, and communities governed by a tribal chief, variously called a *mencey* or *guanarteme*. And they practised a simple form of embalming and mummification, elsewhere practised only in Egypt and Peru.

Where did they come from? Why? How? There are plenty of theories but very few facts. Fanciful folk think they were the last remaining ancestors of the people of Atlantis. Others point to their fair skins and blue eyes and cry: Vikings! Still others suggest they were originally Italian or Greek or Phoenician. But such ideas fail to take account of one indisputable fact; the Guanches had no boats – indeed they had no knowledge at all of navigation.

Most recent research suggests the Guanches were of mixed origin, belonging to several North African tribes who inhabited the mountains of Mauretania; this would explain the minor linguistic and cultural distinctions between the inhabitants of different islands. Possibly they were related to the Berbers, another fair-skinned people of North Africa. As to how they reached the Canaries, the evidence is more circumstantial, but what it points to is this. By about AD 40, the Roman Empire had extended into Mauretania, shortly after the death of King Juba II. In their usual organized way, the Romans set about subduing and taxing the unfortunate locals, and came up against fierce resistance from those hill tribesmen. The rebels may then have been captured and exiled to the uninhabited islands which Juba's expedition had found. It's just a theory, but it works. If the Guanches were originally hill tribesmen, they'd have had no knowledge of boats; when the ships carrying the exiles had returned to Mauretania, the first Canary Islanders would not have known how to build their own, even though there was timber aplenty around them. And one odd story seems to support the theory: an 18th century sailor, quoting at umpteenth hand, described how some of the Mauretanian rebels were punished by having their tongues cut out before being transported to the Canaries. Now when the *conquistadores* arrived, they noted that the natives in Gomera, one of the smaller islands, had developed a whistling language in which they used their fingers to articulate sounds – could this be because the first Gomerans had lost their tongues?

If that was the way the Guanches arrived in the Canaries, the end of the story was equally bloody. The Spaniards massacred, enslaved and sold them, and the few who survived intermarried and interbred with their conquerors until their bloodline was virtually lost. Now all that remains are their mummies, artefacts, a few aboriginal placenames and lots of academic theories.

The Conquest. Lasting almost a century, the conquest of the Canaries began in 1402 when two French adventurers, Jean de Bethencourt and Gadifer de la Salle, came to the islands, ostensibly to spread Christianity but more likely to find riches in the form of orchilla and slaves. They landed first on Lanzarote, then on Fuerteventura, and met only friendliness initially from the Guanches, but as the Frenchmen raided the islands, seizing and killing the people, they found increasing resistance. In 1403, Bethencourt went off to Spain for royal approval and support for his plans, declared himself a vassal of the Spanish King, doublecrossed his partner Gadifer and returned with sole rights over the islands. By 1405 Bethencourt claimed to have conquered Lanzarote, Fuerteventura and Hierro; in the other four islands he found Guanche resistance too formidable for easy victory, but that didn't stop him declaring himself 'King of the Canaries'.

The following fifty years saw infighting and intrigues among the Norman and other families whom Bethencourt had brought to colonize the islands. His nephew Maciot sold his ownership of Lanzarote to the King of Portugal in 1448, but by now most of the interested parties were Spanish, dominated by one family, Fernán Peraza and his son-in-law Diego de Herrera.

The Guanches meanwhile were putting up a fierce defence against Spanish raids into the four unconquered islands. Peraza's own son died during an attempt to take La Palma, and though Peraza based himself at San Sebastián in Gomera he was under almost continual siege from the natives.

Then, in the 1470s, the Conquest moved into a new phase. The Portuguese ceded their rights to the Catholic Kings of Spain, Fernando and Isabel, who sent Juan Rejón out to the Canaries to stop ownership squabbles and claim the islands for the Spanish Crown. In 1478 Juan Rejón landed at Las Palmas in Gran Canaria and achieved victory over the Guanches at the Battle of Guiniguada, but he too became involved in murderous intrigues and was shortly replaced by Pedro de Vera in 1480. It was de Vera, accompanied by Alonso de Lugo, who finally conquered Gran Canaria in 1483. Before the island's conquest, there were thought to

have been at least 10,000 Guanche inhabitants; ten years later less than 100 were left, the rest having been killed or sent into slavery, mostly to southern Spain and the Balearic Islands. De Vera proceeded to Gomera, while Alonso de Lugo went on to La Palma. The Gomerans had risen against their overlord, grandson of Fernán Peraza and bearing his name, and killed him in 1488, while his widow, Beatriz de Bobadilla, sought refuge in the Torre del Conde, a small fortress built by the elder Peraza. De Vera lured the natives to a peace meeting, then slaughtered or deported them as slaves – men, women and children.

Next, La Palma. Alonso de Lugo gathered a force of men and landed at Tazacorte in 1491. He met surprisingly little opposition at first, but his despotic ways soon caused the Guanches to rise against him. Through a combination of superior weapons and treachery, the Spaniards finally suppressed them in 1493.

Now only Tenerife remained to be conquered. In 1464, Diego de Herrera had arrived in northern Tenerife and built a fort at the port of Anazo (now Santa Cruz), but the Guanches had beaten him back and destroyed his fort. Thirty years on, Alonso de Lugo tried again. Landing at Anazo, he made his way across the island towards the valley of La Orotava; there he and his men were ambushed, suffering heavy losses, and forced to retreat; the site of this ambush is now the village of La Matanza de Acentejo (The Massacre of Acentejo). The following year de Lugo returned with more troops and weapons. He first engaged the Guanches at La Laguna, killing Bencomo, chief of the Guanches. Led by Bencomo's son, the islanders retreated into the hills to regroup while de Lugo planned his final assault. The last battle took place only a few miles from La Matanza; in bloody revenge, the Spaniards slaughtered the Guanches at La Victoria de Acentejo (The Victory of Acentejo). Apart from mopping up operations, that was it. After almost a hundred years, the Conquest of the Canary Islands was complete.

Columbus. Christopher Columbus was here – or Cristobal Colón, as the Spaniards call him. In August 1492 he left Spain at the beginning of his quest for the Indies, steering course for the Canary Islands. One of his ships was making water and had to put into Gran Canaria for repairs; restless and impatient, Columbus sailed on to Gomera where he stayed at San Sebastián. He may already have met Beatriz de Bobadilla at the Spanish Court; she had been a favourite of King Fernando, and Queen Isabel had disposed of the potential rival by getting her married off to Fernán Peraza Jr, Count of Gomera. At any rate, there are stories of a romance between La Bobadilla and Columbus, though her attractions clearly could not compete with his grand mission. Returning to Gran

Canaria, Columbus had to sail round Tenerife, where according to his journal he observed 'a great fire coming from the mountain . . . which is remarkably lofty' – Mount Teide was erupting. The ship needing repairs had been left at Las Palmas, already a sizeable port, and Columbus evidently found the facilities satisfactory for he was to return to both on his later voyages (1493, 1498).

So the Canaries were established as a useful staging post between Europe and the Americas. Both northerly winds and Canary currents suited the early navigators very well, and the new ports supplied the adventurers with necessary provisions and a last taste of home comforts before the long transatlantic voyage.

Colonization. With the Conquest, the Canaries had suddenly jumped from the Stone Age into the 'civilized' European Middle Ages. The Guanches' caves and primitive culture were of no use to the *conquistadores*, who had already set about colonizing the islands long before de Lugo's final battle for Tenerife. Spaniards, Portuguese and others settled down to exploit the timber and orchilla and slave trade, to build homes and ports and towns, and to cultivate the land for themselves. Sugarcane was imported from Madeira in 1485 and soon became a major crop, sugar being exported along with the orchilla, cereals, cheese and slaves. Merchants and traders made a beeline for the new ports, encouraged by the special fiscal advantages that Spain granted to the Canaries in order to attract more colonists and promote commerce with the Indies.

In the wake of Columbus came thousands of others, using the Canaries as a launch pad into the New World; indeed, many of the early colonists joined Columbus, lured on by the prospect of gold and glory. So, by the end of the 15th century, the Canaries were an important part of the new Spanish Empire.

The 16th and 17th Centuries. The Canary-American influence was two-sided. As the bold adventurers sailed home in triumph from Central and South America, they brought potatoes, tomatoes, tobacco, maize – all of which flourished (then as now) in the subtropical Canaries. They also brought cultural influences which account for many of the South American words and customs still noticeable today in the Canaries (e.g. *papas*, the local word for potatoes, which mainland Spain calls *patatas*).

With these new crops to cultivate and the new towns and ports being founded, the *Canarios* (Canary Islanders) must have foreseen a great future, but the islands were still a disunited archipelago. Four islands (Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, Gomera and Hierro) were in effect privately owned *señorios*, while the other three (Gran Canaria, Tenerife, La

Palma) were the property of the Spanish Crown. Pedro de Vera was appointed first governor of Gran Canaria, and Alonso de Lugo – now hailed as ultimate hero and given the honorary title of *Adelantado* – became first governor of Tenerife and La Palma in 1503. (He had in the meantime married La Bobadilla, the merry widow herself, so he'd also got a foot in the door of Gomera.) Moreover, pirates and privateers were a constant threat, attracted by the great wealth arriving from the Americas; French, English, Dutchmen loomed continually on the horizon, ready for business whenever a caravel struggled the port from Cuba or Venezuela. One of the most notorious was Sir John Hawkins (known here by the Spanish corruption of his name, 'Aquines') who had clandestine dealings in the Canaries, probably to do with the slave trade. The Portuguese, Genoese and Moors were also intent on catching slaves – Guanches or Spanish colonists, it made no difference; no wonder the earliest towns in the islands were built well away from the coasts, to avoid the rapacious pirates and slavers.

In 1504 the Grand Inquisitors set up a Tribunal in Las Palmas to get rid of Jews and Moors, and later to root out all non-Catholics. Their activities left a lasting bitterness in the islands which had attracted so many foreign merchants and traders; England even went so far as to sign agreements with Spain to protect her subjects in the islands. The sugar trade was drastically reduced in mid century when the Canaries themselves blithely introduced sugarcane into Cuba, where climate and soil produced even better crops than here, but the vine, introduced from Madeira, Italy and Greece the previous century, began to take over as Number One crop.

Philip II of Spain created the post of Captain-General of the Canaries in 1589, as a means of unifying defence against pirates and other unwelcome visitors, and the islands continued to enjoy their unique and advantageous commercial relationship with the Americas. The ports of Las Palmas, Santa Cruz de La Palma, San Sebastián de La Gomera and Garachico (Tenerife) flourished; cities and bishoprics were founded, and the population steadily increased.

In 1610, the Canaries suffered a bitter blow. Their free-trading advantages were drastically reduced. However, the wine trade was growing apace, above all with England. Ben Jonson (1572-1637) wrote:

> But that which doth take my Muse and me
> Is a pure cup of rich Canary wine...
> Of which, had Horace or Anacreon tasted,
> Their lives, as do their lines, till now had lasted

and Falstaff's favourite tipple was sweet Canary 'sack'. Englishmen and Scots and the Irish arrived in force, attempting to monopolize the new

commodity and settling particularly round Puerto de la Cruz (Tenerife); their coming partially compensated for the many emigrants now leaving the Canaries for Cuba, Venezuela and elsewhere as a result of the commercial restrictions, continuing pirate raids and military conscription for the futile war in the Low Countries. By 1688 there was an estimated population of 105,000 colonists, plus an unknown number of Guanche slaves and itinerant traders.

The 18th Century. The first half of the 18th century was pretty grim. The economic crisis persisted as a result of the 17th century restrictions on trade with the New World and the lost sugar trade; epidemics and hunger were rife; there was political insecurity, continuing attacks from pirates (especially Moors) and a consequent increase in emigration. And there were several major volcanic eruptions. In Tenerife in 1704 the area around Güimar was laid waste, and in 1706 El Volcán Negro (the Black Volcano) destroyed the flourishing port of Garachico. Most devasting of all was the Timanfaya eruption in Lanzarote which began in 1730 and continued for seven years, the thunderous explosions audible from as far away as Tenerife.

But around 1760 there was a turn for the better. The reign of Carlos III (1759-88), that 'enlightened despot', saw a restoration of trade with the Americas and improvements in both economic and cultural spheres. The wine trade with England picked up, and Canary wine also went to Central and South America, which sent back cargoes of sugar and tobacco. Curiously, trade with mainland Spain was minimal. As well as the vines, tobacco, orchilla and *barrilla* were cultivated, orchilla for its purple dye and *barilla* (glasswort) for the soda produced when the plant is burnt (used in the soap and glass-making industries). Agriculture was still hampered, however, by the relative lack of cultivatable land and perennial shortage of water, though gradually terraces were being built up the hillsides and watercourses constructed to tap the underground water reserves. Cultural institutions sprang up, especially in Tenerife and Gran Canaria, literary societies and colleges, and the University of La Laguna (Tenerife) dates from this period, which later came to be called the Canaries' Golden Age. The beautiful Botanical Garden in the Valley of La Orotava (Tenerife) was created in Carlos III's reign, as a centre for the acclimatization of tropical plants, and in 1799 the German naturalist Humboldt, on his way home from South America, declared the Orotava Valley to be one of the loveliest places on Earth.

A less appreciative visitor was Admiral Horatio Nelson, who arrived at Santa Cruz de Tenerife in 1797 and lost the only naval battle of his career, getting his arm shot off in the process.

The 19th Century. The Peninsular Wars marked the start of the century in the islands with the Canaries sending battalions to fight against Napoleon and receiving contingents of French prisoners in return. Then in 1812 the Constitution of Cadiz marked the birth of liberalism throughout Spain, and led directly to radical changes in Canary Island administration. The *señorios* (private ownership) of Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, Gomera and Hierro were abolished and in 1823 the whole archipelago became a single united province of Spain, its capital at Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Gran Canaria was incensed at thus being passed over in favour of Tenerife and there was intense inter-island rivalry for the next hundred years.

However, all the islands rejoiced together when the 'Law of Free Ports' was passed in 1852, effectively turning the archipelago into one big duty-free area and attracting new trade not just with the Americas but with the whole world. The wine trade was fading but a new commerce sprang up in cochineal. The cochineal bug had been introduced from Mexico in the 1820s and was cultivated on cactus plants; when harvested – killed, crushed and powdered – the insect provides a nontoxic red dye, then invaluable in numerous industries. By mid century, men were growing rich from cochineal, but chemical substitutes were already being found and production rapidly fell during the 1870s. All was not lost, however, for banana plantations were introduced with singular success at the end of the century, cultivated mainly by the British; sugarcane was re-introduced, and tomatoes and other crops began to be exported.

The 20th Century. The years of peace and prosperity were suddenly ended at the turn of this century. Although Spain remained neutral during the First World War, the Canaries particularly suffered from the drop in maritime traffic. The monarchy under Alfonso XIII was losing prestige in the face of anarchist outrages, labour disputes and anti-clerical rioting; the King attempted to correct things by establishing a right wing dictatorship under Primo de Rivera (in office 1923-30). He promoted a fascist-style administration but the Canaries had plenty to thank him for; roads and public works, the foundation of an oil refinery at Santa Cruz de Tenerife, the increase in banana and tomato exports all happened during his time. Finally Gran Canaria saw justice done; in 1927 the archipelago was declared to be *two* provinces of Spain, with two capitals, one at Santa Cruz de Tenerife and the other at Las Palmas. In 1930 Primo de Rivera resigned, mounting republican feeling forced King Alfonso into exile, and the 1931 elections resulted in an overwhelming victory for the republicans. Primo de Rivera's son, José

Antonio, founded the strongly anti-republican Falange party, and the country was clearly heading for civil war. Meanwhile, the Military Governor of the Canary Islands was watching events with a critical eye; his name was General Francisco Franco. It was while serving as governor in Tenerife that Franco led the anti-socialist revolt which sparked off the Spanish Civil War.

Following the Civil War and the Second World War (Spain again stayed neutral), the economic situation was desperate, but from the 1950s onward – helped by the Spanish-American pact (Franco allowed NATO bases on Spanish soil in return for massive financial aid) – trade and industry rapidly improved. Thanks to improvements in refrigeration and to regular commercial air transport, bananas dominated the Canaries' agricultural exports, but tomatoes and other fruits began to be cultivated on an ever-increasing scale. The ports of Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Las Palmas in Gran Canaria were enlarged and improved to cope with modern shipping. And finally there was the 20th century industry – tourism. Wealthy North Europeans had long ago discovered the islands to be a perfect winter hide-out, but air travel was what opened the floodgates.

Today

With a population now of around 1½ million, and a flourishing economy based on agriculture and tourism, the Canaries no longer see the widespread emigration that once characterized these islands. And the political situation is stable, thanks to the peaceful handover of power under Franco's appointed heir, King Juan Carlos, and the restoration of democratic elections and institutions. There is a faint but discernible movement towards devolution, as the graffiti disclose, even towards complete independence for the Canaries; the islanders tend to mutter rude words about the *peninsulares*, as they call mainland Spaniards, but feelings seem to be at about the same non-violent level as Scottish Nationalism.

The two provinces – Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Santa Cruz de Tenerife – are friendly rivals now. Las Palmas province comprises Lanzarote and Fuerteventura as well as Gran Canaria; Santa Cruz province numbers three islands besides Tenerife: La Palma, Hierro and Gomera. The two major islands are the most developed, most populated, most dynamic, but each of the islands has her own attractions.

Agriculture. The main export crops today are bananas, tomatoes, potatoes, various other vegetables and fruit and flowers, in that order.

Banana plantations cover the northern coastal zones with a tropical-looking sea of green rising up the lower slopes on low man-made terraces, irrigated by little watercourses leading from hundreds of precious reservoirs. Introduced by a French naturalist, banana cultivation was built up by the British – among them some familiar names such as Fyffes. Once exported almost solely to the UK, Canary Island bananas now go all over the world, though mainly to Scandinavia, Western Europe and Britain. Transportation is delicate, but the unripe bunches are wrapped in soft protective bundles of pine needles or straw and loaded into the refrigerated holds of cargo ships to turn yellow in our northern fruitbowls. The special Canary Island banana is small and sweet; they call it the *chino* or *enano* (dwarf) banana, of the species *Musa cavendishii.* If you're allergic to bananas, tough luck – they're served on every table in the archipelago.

The tomato was first cultivated in Gran Canaria by an Englishman in 1885; such was his success that other farmers copied him and the tomato export trade began in the early 20th century. They grow mainly in lower south-facing zones of Gran Canaria and Tenerife, and in the easterly islands where the relatively poor soil suits the plant just fine – so long as it is well mulched and watered. The main varieties grown fall into two categories: the small round tomatoes that the British prefer, and the nice big tasty but misshapen ones that the rest of Europe likes.

Other exports crops include peppers, melons, flowers (mainly roses, strelitzias and carnations), flown to northern destinations to keep Inter-Flora in business. Cereals and vines are also grown, mostly for home consumption, and temperate fruits such as apples, as well as tobacco – there is a big cigar/cigarette industry in the islands. Potatoes, another major crop, are grown from seed potatoes imported from Scotland and Ireland, mostly for home use but 25% for export to the UK.

Even on the drier eastern islands, Lanzarote and Fuerteventura, crops such as tomatoes, figs, melons and grapes are grown by dint of hard labour and ingenious methods. With their particularly severe water problem, these islanders make use of the humidity and nightly dews, scraping saucers in the land and filling them with moisture-retaining volcanic ash to keep roots from drying out.

Fishing. With rich fishing grounds all round the Canaries, it's not surprising that many islanders are involved in the fishing industry, though catches are small compared with the number of boats, thanks to antiquated methods. Russian and Japanese fleets sail in with great modern refrigerated ships to take advantage of what the Canary Islanders' small wooden boats cannot, but the situation is gradually

improving as fishing ports and boats are modernized, with canning factories, refrigeration facilities and a growing export market for canned and preserved fish. Gran Canaria, Tenerife and Lanzarote are the main fishing islands, and the catches include tuna (tunny), swordfish, mackerel and sardines.

Industry. In these islands industry plays a relatively small part in the economy. Excluding tourism, the major industrial towns are Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Las Palmas (Gran Canaria) and Arrecife (Lanzarote). In Santa Cruz de Tenerife the major industry is tobacco with several cigar and cigarette-making factories, followed by the petrochemical industry centring on the CEPSA oil refinery. Las Palmas too has a major refinery in the docks complex where huge tankers arrive to offload the crude oil that is turned into petrol, butane and propane gas etc.

Tourism. A recent phenomenon here, the tourist boom in the Canaries began in the late '60s and has made a major impact on the islands' economy. Suddenly there began a massive programme of hotel-building, new roads were constructed and the whole infrastructure of transport, commerce and services was revitalized. From around 350,000 tourists in 1965 the annual figure has leapt to over 2 million, mainly British, German and Scandinavian. For some reason, the Germans and Scandinavians prefer Las Palmas province, especially Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura, while the British go more for Tenerife. The biggest tourist areas are in the south of Tenerife and Gran Canaria, in Las Palmas and in Puerto de la Cruz, with new developments mushrooming in many other areas, often as a result of foreign enterprise. Because of the late growth of tourism here, the island authorities have generally been able to avoid the mistakes and excesses committed on the Peninsula. If the mention of Costa Brava or Torremolinos brings you out in a rash, rest assured; the Canaries have few such horrors.

With year-round sunshine here, there is no 'high season' as such, although some people still choose to regard the Canaries as an alterna tive to, say, the Caribbean during the winter season, so hotel accommodation tends to be most booked up (and up to 15% more expensive) from December to March inclusive.

The People. The islanders are of Spanish nationality but consider themselves first and foremost *Canarios*, a name which strictly speaking applies only to those who come from Gran Canaria; there are also *palmeros* (La Palma), *Herreños* (Hierro), *Gomeros* (Gomera), *Tinerfeños* or *Chichereros* (Tenerife), *Mahohs* or *Majoreros* (Fuer-

teventura) and *Lanzaroteños* or *Conejos*, literally 'rabbits' (Lanzarote). It's the Spanish culture that is dominant but there are strong South American, Portuguese and British influences. The *Canarios*' Spanish presents no great differences from peninsular Spanish (see Appendix I), though here again there are distinct foreign influences especially from South America, visited by so many *emigrantes*. The British community, now around 4-5,000, has been such a long-term presence that many street names and business advertisements have a very un-Spanish sound – Calle Doctor Ingram and Calle José Murphy, Viajes Blandy, Hamil ton y Cia.

In character, the typical *Canario* is conservative, self-reliant, hardworking and generally tolerant – except of the *peninsulares* (Spaniards from the mainland, the Peninsula) who are rudely referred to as *los godos* – literally 'Goths' with overtones of pretentiousness. Foreigners are positively welcomed, now as for so many centuries.

Festivals and Folklore. Like the Spanish, the *Canarios* find any excuse for a fiesta and there are hundreds of them every year – solemnly marking a local saint's day, proudly commemorating some past event, or joyously celebrating a local or national holiday. Religious fiestas often begin with a *romería*, a pilgrimage, with processions of people, horses, bands etc gathering at the local church to celebrate Mass and then breaking into fun and games, with music and dancing and general merriment. Most of the participants dress up in traditional costume and the *carretas* (carts) are gaily decorated; all very picturesque. Nowadays many fiestas are such elaborate, expensive affairs that you presume it's all laid on for the tourist; to a certain degree that's true, but there's nothing self-conscious or awkward about these events, it's just that the Canary Islanders take their merrymaking very seriously. Some of the main festivals are listed below.

Cabalgata de los Reyes (Procession of the Kings), 5 January: parades, costumes, music; best seen in Las Palmas, Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Garachico (Tenerife).

Carnaval (sic) or *Winter Festival*, before Lent; celebrated in a big way in Tenerife, with masquerades and music and a thoroughly Latin American flavour.

Semana Santa (Holy Week): everywhere marked by solemn process ions, especially impressive in Tenerife (La Laguna, La Orotava) and Gran Canaria (Las Palmas).

Corpus Christi (May/June): a week of general religious festivities crowned by the gorgeous intricate 'floral carpets' in the streets (see

below), notably in La Laguna and La Orotava (Tenerife) , Las Palmas and Arucas (Gran Canaria).

Romería de San Isidro (June): a four-day festival in La Orotava, Tenerife, with floral carpets, processions and music.

La Bajada de la Rama or *Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de las Nieves* (The Bringing Down of the Bough or Festival of Our Lady of the Snows), in August: celebrated at Agaete in Gran Canaria, this festival has been declared 'of touristic interest' and involves people waving branches at the image of Our Lady, a typical colourful mixture of piety and secular merrymaking.

Fiesta de la Asunción (Assumption) in August: at Candelaria in Tenerife, a celebration to honour the image of the Virgin which was found on the shores of Tenerife by the Guanches, before the Spaniards arrived.

Semana Colombina, or Columbus Week (September): marked especially in San Sebastián de la Gomera to celebrate Christopher Columbus's visits.

Fiesta de Nuestra Señora del Pino, Our Lady of the Pine (September): the Canary Islands' patroness, Our Lady of the Pine was apparently found in a pine tree near Teror, Gran Canaria, where the annual religious fiesta attracts pilgrims from all over the archipelago.

Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de la Luz, Our Lady of the Light (October): celebrated in Las Palmas, with everything from religious events to fireworks.

The floral carpets that are so characteristic of Corpus Christi celebrations here are stunningly beautiful. The custom is said to have started in 1847 in La Orotava; an aristocratic lady wanted something special to decorate the street outside her home so she had flowers laid over the cobbles where the religious processions would tread. Soon everyone was copying her, not just in Tenerife but throughout the Canaries and in other parts of the world. The 'carpets' are made of flower petals, leaves and other vegetable material spread inside metal or wooden frames or laid on chalked out patterns. When the frames are removed, the result varies from simple colourful flower designs to immensely detailed religious scenes, all fated to be trodden under foot during the processions. Different coloured volcanic sands, grains of cereal and salt are also used to create these ephemeral works of art, particularly the exquisite masterpiece in La Orotava's main square.

Folk Music and Dancing. Each island has its own peculiarities but in general the music displays Spanish and South American influences, performed on the guitar, flute and tambourine and the Canaries' most

typical musical instrument, the *timple*. Much like a small guitar, the *timple* is thought to be South American in origin, probably adopted here only in the 19th century. The Guanches apparently had few musical instruments, accompanying their dances only with song and the odd primitive drum or rattle.

Canary Island dances are lively and colourful, with two dances in particular – the *folia* and the *isa* – showing the *Canario* character. The *folia* is slow, the man demonstrating his feelings for the woman with dignity and restraint, accompanied by *folia* songs which have been compared with Portuguese *fados*. The *isa* on the other hand is light and humorous, more like the Aragonese *jota*. The dancing displays are invariably performed in traditional local costumes. With inter-island variations, the women wear brightly striped skirts over long white petticoats, puff sleeved blouses and embroidered waistcoats and dainty lace-trimmed aprons, black ankle boots, scarves plus hat. In the eastern islands the scarf covers most of the face and is topped by a deep-brimmed straw hat, to prevent the women's skin from acquiring the deep tan which would have made her resemble the detested Moors. The men's typical costume includes black knee-length trousers over white underbreeches, white shirt, long red waistcoats and red cummerbund or sash, white spats over boots or shoes and a soft-brimmed black hat.

Attractive displays of dancing, music and song form an integral part of the festivals, but hotels and local authorities lay on additional performances, notably in Las Palmas, where the Pueblo Canario sees twice-weekly *exhibiciones folklóricos* (ask at the Tourist Office for details).

Other Local Entertainments. After football, the most popular spectator sport in the Canaries is *la lucha canaria*, a form of wrestling of unknown origins, often included in those 'folkloric exhibitions'. With all the complicated rules governing permissable holds and throws it's a lot less dirty than we in Britain or America are used to, though none the less entertaining. The participants are divided into two opposing teams, but the fights are conducted singly, the object being to throw one's opponent to the ground; the victorious team is the one with most throws to its credit.

Bullfighting is not a traditional sport in the Canaries but there are two big arenas (*plazas de toros*), one in Las Palmas, the other in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, with occasional *corridas* in temporary arenas elsewhere. The season is roughly October to February. Another bloodthirsty entertainment is cock-fighting (*peleas de gallos*), legal, organized and held throughout the year all over the islands. Bets are placed, two

cockerels arrive, beaks, wings and claws are flashed to fatal effect, and the victor is cheered. Five minutes later another pair of birds suffer the same way.

One very different attraction is the sailing regattas or *Vela Latina*, an exclusively Canary Island event involving lateen-rigged yachts with wooden hulls. The regatta season is March to October, major races taking place in June-July off the shores of Las Palmas.

2 Getting There

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The Canaries are easily accessible both by air and sea. Most international flights go to Gando Airport in Gran Canaria or the new Reina Sofia Airport in southern Tenerife. Both are large modern installations, the latter opened by Queen Sofia, wife of Juan Carlos, in November 1979, an essential improvement on the ill favoured Los Rodeos Airport in north Tenerife. All the other islands have their own airports with the exception of Gomera; there are plans to build an airport here but the mountainous terrain is a massive obstacle and for now you can only go by sea.

The two major ports are Las Palmas and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, with cruise ships also calling at Arrecife (Lanzarote) and Puerto del Rosario (Fuerteventura).

By Air

Scheduled services are more frequent in summer than in winter; fares are also higher in summer. Iberia, the Spanish national airline, runs most of the services, usually to the two big international airports with inter-island connections.

For details, apply to any Iberia office or to your travel agent. The following is a rough guide to scheduled services – but remember that there is an alternative: charter flights (see below).

From the UK. Iberia has flights to Las Palmas and to Tenerife South (i.e. Reina Sofia Airport) from London Heathrow, one each a week in

winter, four or five each in summer, some stopping en route at Madrid or Bilbao in Northern Spain. A direct flight takes about 4 hours, a stopover lengthens the journey time by about an hour. There are often connecting flights within the UK (from Glasgow, Manchester, Belfast etc) and at the other end to the smaller islands.

British Caledonian also flies to Las Palmas from London Gatwick (once a week in winter, several a week in summer).

One-way adult fares (economy class) range from about £230 in winter, but excursion fares can get you there and back from around £189.

From the USA. From New York, Iberia and TWA both fly scheduled services to Las Palmas and Tenerife via Madrid, around three times a week in summer (once a week in winter), and TAP (Air Portugal) runs a once-weekly summer service to Las Palmas – $437-$664 one-way economy class, according to season; $524 low season excursion rates (round trip), $600 high season.

From Canada. Iberia and Air Canada fly to the Canaries about once a week in winter, four or five times a week in summer, from Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec City, Toronto and Vancouver. Sample cost: Montreal to Las Palmas – $802 (high season)/$754 (low season) one-way economy class; excursion rates range from about $759 in winter, $1,185 in summer for the round trip.

From Spain. Not unexpectedly there are many more scheduled services (Iberia again) between Spain and the Canaries – from Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Malaga, Bilbao, Valencia, Alicante, Jerez de la Frontera and Santiago de Compostela. If you have problems getting a direct flight to the Canaries, you might try catching a plane to any one of these airports and flying on from there. From Madrid, for example, there are *at least*: four flights daily to Tenerife, four daily to Gran Canaria, one a day to La Palma via Tenerife, two a week to Lanzarote, one a week to Fuerteventura. Sample prices: e.g. Madrid to Las Palmas – economy fare from $57/US$ 102 one-way.

From Madeira. TAP, the Portuguese airline, fly twice a week all year round from Funchal to Las Palmas. The trip takes around one hour; the economy one-way fare is presently about $55/US$100.

Charter Flights. Cheaper and often more convenient flights (more direct, more choice of departure airports) are run by various tour operators all year round, sometimes as part of an all-inclusive 'package'. Whether or not you take up the accommodation, it's often the easiest and least expensive method of reaching the islands, and once you are there, no one obliges you to stay with the crowd. Numerous companies and agencies

specialize in the Canaries; watch the newspaper ads or ask your travel agent for details. Their prices vary enormously – generally highest between December and March, and again between June and September – and it is well worth looking around for what best suits you.

Airports in the Canaries. *Tenerife:* Los Rodeos in the north (8 miles from Santa Cruz).
Reina Sofia in the south (40 miles from Santa Cruz).
Gran Canaria: Gando Airport (12½ miles south of Las Palmas).
Lanzarote: Arrecife's airport is four miles to the south.
Fuerteventura: 4 miles south off Puerto del Rosario.
La Palma: 5 miles south of Santa Cruz de la Palma.
Hierro: Valverde's airport is 5 miles away.

The two international airports, Reina Sofia and Gando, have the best facilities, but Lanzarote's airport deserves a mention – it must be the prettiest in the world, all green and white with handsome murals and masses of plants. Although Tenerife's new airport seems so far from the capital, the road north is a wide fast motorway and there are good bus services as well as taxis and car hire agencies at the airport; it is however very convenient for the new tourist developments round Los Cristianos.

Note that you are advised to check in at least 30 minutes before departure time, even for the short inter-island flights (see below) which also have the usual baggage restrictions (e.g. 44lb for 'tourist class').

Inter-Island Flights

Regular domestic flights serving all the islands except Gomera are run by Iberia and its subsidiary, Aviaco. There tend to be more frequent flights in summer, but the table below gives a rough guide to the frequency as well as journey time and adult economy one-way fares (return fares are double the one-way fare; babies under two 10% of adult fare, children under 12 half price). Note that for flights after 9 pm the fare is 25% cheaper. First-class fares are around 20% more than for economy class.

		Approx Frequency	Length of Journey	Approx Price
Gran Canaria to	Fuerteventura	3 x day	30 mins	£11/$19
	Lanzarote	5 x day	35 mins	£12/$22
	Tenerife (North)	2 x day	30 mins	£8/$14
	Tenerife (South)	5 x day	30 mins	£8/$14

	La Palma	2 x day	40 mins	£15/$26
Hierro	**to Tenerife (North)**	2 x day	45 mins	£6/$11
	La Palma	2 x week	25 mins	£10/$18
La Palma to	Gran Canaria	2 x day	40 mins	£15/$26
	Tenerife (North)	4 x day	30 mins	£9/$16
	Tenerife (South)	3 x day	35 mins	£9/$16
	Hierro	2 x week	25 mins	£6/$11
Tenerife (North) to	Lanzarote	2 x day	40 mins	£14/$25
	Fuerteventura	1 x day	55 mins	£15/$26
	Gran Canaria	2 x day	30 mins	£8/$14
	La Palma	4 x day	30 mins	£9/$16
	Hierro	2 x day	45 mins	£10/$18
Tenerife (North) to	Lanzarote	1 x day	40 mins	£14/$25
	Gran Canaria	5 x day	30 mins	£8/$14
	La Palma	3 x day	35 mins	£9/$16
Lanzarote to	Fuerteventura	3 x week	20 mins	£4/$7
	Gran Canaria	5 x day	45 mins	£12/$22
	Tenerife (N/S)	2 x day	40 mins	£14/$25
Fuerteventura to	Lanzarote	3 x week	20 mins	£4/$7
	Gran Canaria	3 x day	30 mins	£11/$19
	Tenerife (North)	1 x day	55 mins	£15/$26

By Sea

The islands have long been visited by cargo and passenger ships en route for South Africa and the East, and the ports of Las Palmas and Santa Cruz de Tenerife are still on many shipping lines' itineraries. Depending on what you want, you can choose from Fred Olsen Lines' winter cruises, the car ferry from Cadiz or several irrregular sailings on other cruise ships or cargo ships.

1. *Fred Olsen Lines.* (a) From London (Tilbury Docks). There are two ships that sail to the Canaries every fortnight between September and May: *Black Watch* and *Blenheim.* Both call in at Funchal (Madeira), Arrecife (Lanzarote), Santa Cruz de Tenerife and then turn around at Las Palmas. Interport or one-way passengers are accepted. Sailing times: e.g. London to Arrecife 6 days.

(b) From Rotterdam in the Netherlands, the *Black Prince* sails every fortnight between September and May, following much the same route

as the other two ships. For details apply to your travel agent or to Fred Olsen offices (see addresses below).

2. *Car ferry from Cadiz.* The Compañia Trasmediterranea has a twice-weekly passenger and car service from Cadiz in southern Spain to Las Palmas and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, all year round (32 hours to Las Palmas, 39 hours to Santa Cruz). Details from the Compañia Trasmediterranea offices listed below.

3. *Other shipping lines.* Fortnightly passenger and cargo services are provided by Polish Ocean Lines from Hamburg (or Rotterdam, Dunkirk, Antwerp, Rouen) to Las Palmas. Calmedia Spa di Navigazione send a monthly ship from Italy to Las Palmas/Santa Cruz de Tenerife and on to South America. Other occasional sailings are run by various companies, mostly on cargo ships that accept only a few passengers. For details on these you should apply to the long-suffering travel agent or find your way round *The ABC Guide to World Shipping* available at most public libraries.

Addresses of Shipping Lines

Fred Olsen Lines

(a) in the UK: 229 Regent Street, London W.1 (01-437 9888).
(b) in the USA: Bergen Line, 505 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (212-986 2711).
(c) in the Canaries: Agencia Fred Olsen SA, Calle Maestro Valle 22, Ciudad Jardín, Las Palmas (23 21 66); Agencia Fred Olsen SA, Calle Dr Zerolo 14, Santa Cruz de Tenerife (27 51 00).

Compañia Trasmediterranea

(a) in the UK: Melia Travel, 12 Dover Street, London W.1 (01-499 6731).
(b) in Spain: Plaza Manuel Gomez Moreno s/n, Esquina a Orense 4, Madred 20 (455 00 49).
(c) in the Canaries: AUCONA, Muelle Santa Catalina, Las Palmas (26 00 70); AUCONA, Marina 59, Santa Cruz de Tenerife (28 78 50), and at all AUCONA offices throughout Spain and the Canary Islands.

By Yacht

Sailing a yacht to the Canaries is only for the very experienced; this isn't the tame Mediterranean remember. But for those who have the necessary skill (and boat) there are good facilities in the most of the islands. For details of the various ports and marinas, apply to the Spanish

headquarters of the National Assembly of Yacht Captains (Asamblea de Capitanes de Yate, Muelle de España, Zona Deportiva, Barcelona) or the Spanish Sailing Federation (Federación Española de Vela, Juan Vigón 23, Madrid) or the clubs listed below.
In Tenerife: Real Club Náutico, Carretera de San Andrés, Santa Cruz de Tenerife.
In Gran Canaria: Real Club Náutico, Calle León y Castillo, Las Palmas.
In Lanzarote: Club Náutico, Casino Arrecife, Arrecife.
In Gomera: Club Náutico, Calle Calvo Sotelo 7, San Sebastián.

There is also an excellent yachting package run by Canary Island Yacht Holidays (UK address: 37 East Street, Horsham, Sussex; tel. Horsham 51850). For £500 they fly you out to Arrecife, Lanzarote, for a 2-week cruise around the islands in a handsome 'Ocean 60' class schooner. With a professional skipper and mate on board, you can do as much or as little of the work as you like, and experience is not necessary; if you don't know a sheet from a sail, you could spend the whole fortnight sunbathing on deck and sightseeing ashore.

Inter-Island Sailings

Compañia Trasmediterranea operate the inter-island ferries (passengers plus cars, cargo etc). Schedules vary each year but a rough idea of their frequency is given below. Note that the prices quoted are for one adult sailing one-way; children under 7 pay half the adult fare, return fares are 20% less than double the one-way fare. If you want a cabin (2, 3 or 4 berth), with or without private toilet, you can expect to pay approximately twice the adult single fare; this is often necessary on the overnight trips, particularly with young children.

As a rough guide to prices for vehicles, a 15 ft car going from Santa Cruz de Tenerife to Las Palmas would be about £18/US$32; from Las Palmas to Arrecife (Lanzarote) about £35/US$63.

1. *Between Las Palmas (Gran Canaria) and Santa Cruz de Tenerife*: 2 or 3 sailings daily. (See also the hydrofoil service below.) Journey time: 3½ hours. Fare: £7/US$12.50
2. *Between Las Palmas (Gran Canaria) and Arrecife (Lanzarote):* 3 sailings a week, usually overnight. Journey time: 11 hours. Fare: £12/US$21.50.
3. *Between Las Palmas (Gran Canaria) and Puerto del Rosario (Fuerteventura)*: 3 sailings a week, usually overnight. Journey time: 6½ hours. Fare: £12/US$21.50

4. *Between Puerto del Rosario (Fuerteventura) and Arrecife (Lanzarote)*: 3 sailings a week. Journey time: 2½ hours. Fare: £9/US$16. (See also Alisur Services, below.)
5. *Between Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Santa Cruz de la Palma*: 3 sailings a week, usually overnight. Journey time: 7 hours. Fare: £12/US$21.50
6. *Between Santa Cruz de Tenerife and San Sebastián de la Gomera*: 3 sailings a week, usually overnight. Journey time: 4½ hours. Fare: £12/US$21.50. (See also the Ferry Gomera service below.)
7. *Between Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Valverde (Hierro)*: 3 sailings a week, some overnight. Journey time: 8 hours. Fare: £12/US$21.50.
8. *Between San Sebastián de la Gomera and Valverde (Hierro)*: 3 sailings a week, some overnight. Journey time: 3 hours. Fare: £12/US$21.50.

Compañia Trasmediterranea also operate a **hydrofoil service between Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Las Palmas** (Gran Canaria), sometimes called *el jet foil* or *el jet ferry*. It's a recent introduction and carries only passengers, but is clearly successful and may soon be extended. The journey time is a mere 80 minutes from city centre to city centre; this compares favourably with the aeroplane service which involves the journey times between city and airport as well as the flight itself. It's comfortable and fun. Current costs: £13.50/US$24 (adult one-way fare; children £8/US$14; return fare is double).

An alternative ferry service between Tenerife and Gomera is operated by Ferry Gomera. These passenger-and-car ferries run between Los Cristianos in the south of Tenerife and San Sebastián; they are cheaper, faster and much more frequent than the Trasmediterranea service – there are about 3 sailings a day, every day of the week. Journey time: 1½ hours. Fare: £4/US$7 (adult single), £7/US$12.50 (return); children pay half price. A car of 15 ft would be about £10/US$18 one-way, a motorbike around £3.50/US$5.50. For Ferry Gomera details and bookings, ask at any travel agency or apply to the following offices:

(a) in Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Calle Goya s/n (22 39 64).
(b) in Los Cristianos: Muelle/Quay (79 05 56).
(c) in San Sebastián de la Gomera: Avenida Fred Olsen (344).

An alternative ferry service between Lanzarote and Fuerteventura (passengers only) – faster but more expensive – is run by Alisur SA, linking Puerto del Rosario and Arrecife in a 1-hour journey. Sailings are no more frequent, however: 3 or 4 a week. Details from most travel agents and at the two relevant ports.

Note that all these services are very busy and it is advisable to book in advance. This may be done through almost any travel agency in the islands or through the AUCONA offices listed below.

AUCONA Offices (for Compañia Trasmediterranea bookings)

Gran Canaria: Muelle Santa Catalina, Las Palmas (26 00 70).
Tenerife: Marina 59, Santa Cruz de Tenerife (28 78 50), and Muelle/Quay, Los Cristianos (79 08 57).
Gomera: General Franco 35, San Sebastián (87 08 02).
La Palmas: General Mola 2, Santa Cruz de la Palma (41 11 21).
Fuerteventura: León y Castillo 46, Puerto del Rosario (85 08 77).
Lanzarote: José Antonio 90, Arrecife (81 10 19).

Entry Formalities

British, Irish, American and Canadian citizens need only a valid passport, nothing more; the British Visitors Passport (cheaper, available from post offices) is also accepted. Travellers planning a stay of more than 90 days should contact the Spanish National Tourist Office or the Spanish Embassy before leaving home.

Customs controls are so minimal as to be worth forgetting by the average visitor. You can stagger past the *Aduana* (Customs) notices with an armful of goodies bought on the flight out but you'll only be laughed at; since the Canaries are one big duty-free zone, cigarettes, drinks, perfume, watches, cameras, furs etc can all be bought at much lower prices in the islands than at any airport shop.

3 Getting Around

Driving, p41 Taxis, p43 Excursions, p43 Buses, p44

In the bigger islands there is a wide choice of transport – buses, excursion coaches, taxis, cars and motorbikes for hire but no trains. Bus services are good and cheap, taxis are reasonably priced, car hire and excursion agencies compete for your custom. The less developed islands are not so well served, with infrequent buses and fewer options.

Driving

If you are taking your own car, you'll need an International Driving Licence and a 'bail bond' (obtainable from your insurance company). The Spanish National Tourist Offices and the various motoring organizations can give help and detailed information. If your're planning to hire a car, you also need the International Driving Licence; third party insurance is usually included in the rental fee but extra insurance can be obtained through the agency. Most firms require you to be at least 21 (sometimes over 25) with one year's driving experience; some also like a refundable deposit. The rental fee naturally varies according to what car you want: a little Seat 127 (pronounced SAY-at) would cost around £12/US$21 per day, £70/US$126 per week, while a comfortable big Mercedes might be £100/US$175 a week. A government tax of 2½% is added to the bill.

Car hire agencies include the familiar Hertz and Avis, the local Organización Canaria Coches Alquiler (OCCA), plus numerous other firms. The list below is merely a selection.

In Gran Canaria

Avis: José Maria Duran 13, Las Palmas (26 55 72); at the airport (70 01 57); at Playa San Agustín (76 19 20).
Hertz: Calle Sagasta 29, Las Palmas (26 45 76); at the airport (70 00 84); at Hotel Continental, San Agustín (76 25 72); Playa del Inglés (76 24 03).
Europcar: Maspalomas (76 04 76); San Agustín (76 07 78); Franchy Roca 24, Las Palmas (27 44 59).
OCCA: Portugal 50, Las Palmas (27 44 59); at the airport (70 01 65); Playa del Inglés (76 04 77); at Puerto Rico (74 57 16).
For motorbikes: Autos Baez, Presidente Alvear 6, Las Palmas (24 84 29); Autos Dolar, Presidente Alvear 52, Las Palmas (26 10 80).

In Tenerife

Avis: Alfereces Provisionales/Cruz Marina, Puerto de la Cruz (37 20 57); Reina Sofía Airport (77 13 69); Los Rodeos Airport (25 91 82); Urbanización Gran Chaparral, Costa del Silencio (78 51 54); Playa de las Américas (79 13 02).
Hertz: Santo Domingo 24, Puerto de la Cruz (37 21 60); Playa de las Américas (79 08 61); Reina Sofía Airport (77 10 03); Los Rodeos Airport (25 19 17).
OCCA; Alvarez de Lugo 10, Santa Cruz de Tenerife (28 69 54); Hotel Gran Tinerfe, Playa de las Américas (79 12 04); El Chaparral, Costa del Silencio (78 55 05).
Europcar: Avenida Generalísimo 2 Puerto de la Cruz (37 02 33) Estación Marítime, Santa Cruz (28 47 06); Playa de las Américas (79 12 04).

In Lanzarote

Avis: Puerto del Carmen (82 52 54) and at airport (81 22 56).
Hertz: at the airport (81 22 56).
OCCA: Paz Peraza 38, Arrecife (81 19 25); at Hotel San Antonio, Playa de los Pocillos (82 50 50).

In Fuerteventura

Autos Dominguez, General Franco 5, Puerto del Rosario (85 01 58); at airport (85 13 86).
Autos Maxorata, León y Castillo s/n, Puerto del Rosario (85 05 35).
OCCA: at the airport (81 12 50).

In La Palma

OCCA: at the airport (01 15 40).
The state of the roads varies, from excellent *autopistas* (motorways) linking major centres in Tenerife/Gran Canaria, to rough unmetalled tracks in remote areas. Speed limits are usually 60-90 kmh (37-56 mph), with clear road signs indicating what speed applies where; these should be observed, as traffic police are strict. Similarly, seat belts (or motorcycle helmets) should be worn. And car drivers be warned: it is an offence to overtake another vehicle without flashing your lights to give warning of your approach. Filling stations are rather scarce outside the towns, as are mechanics; it's advisable to fill the fuel tank and check brakes, lights, etc before a journey into the mountains, for example.

Taxis

Taxi ranks adorn every main street and plaza, and you can always flag one down if it says LIBRE (free, for hire) or has a green light showing; the letters SP on the front and rear stand for *Servicio Público* (public service). Their prices are governed by a set tariff in the towns (e.g. 100 ptas to cross the city of Santa Cruz de Tenerife) but tips of 10-15% are customary. Outside the towns, taxi fares are supposed to follow a schedule of 'recommended prices' (ask at the tourist office) but often do not; it is advisable to agree a price in advance with the driver, many of whom speak some English. At present, a taxi ride to Santa Cruz de Tenerife from the new Reina Sofía Airport (40 miles) costs around £15/US$28.

In Las Palmas, there are also **horse carriages** (*tartanas*) to carry the tourist around town. They are to be found for hire in the Parque Santa Catalina.

Excursions

Joining a sightseeing trip is often a good way to see the smaller islands if you're based in, say, Tenerife. The guides generally speak good English, take care of transport problems and supply lots of interesting information on history, folklore and local peculiarities. Half-day trips, whole-day trips, night-time trips; across the islands, up the mountains, round the coasts; donkey safaris, flamenco shows, *sons et lumières* – you name it, they do it. Travel agencies (*agencias de viajes*) operating

excursions and well accustomed to British/North American visitors have offices all over the main islands. Some of the bigger and better ones are listed below.

Viajes Blandy: British-run and long-established, with a good choice of tours and helpful friendly staff. Their offices are at Muelle Santa Catalina 2, Las Palmas (26 45 98); and at Marina 39, Santa Cruz de Tenerife (20 09 06); also at Avenida Generalísimo 10, Puerto de la Cruz (37 00 59).

Cyrasa:A: the major local tour operators, with most branches. In Gran Canaria they have offices at Triana 114, Las Palmas (36 41 00); Edificio Broncemar, Avenida de Italia, Playa del Inglés (25 62 44). In Tenerife: Santo Domingo 13, Puerto de la Cruz (37 27 39). In Lanzarote: General Franco 12, Arrecife (81 03 12).

Viajes Fernando Poo: Another British-run and friendly agency. In Gran Canaria: León y Castillo 361, Las Palmas (24 63 93). In Tenerife: Edificio Hamilton, Marina II, Santa Cruz de Tenerife (24 20 77); also at Reina Sofia Airport (77 00 01).

Viajes Insular: Excursions include air trips to Lanzarote and La Palma. In Gran Canaria: Alejandro Hidalgo 3, Las Palmas (23 31 44); in Tenerife: Avenida Generalísmimo 15, Puerto de la Cruz (38 03 62); in Lanzarote: Avenida Mancomunidad 30, Arrecife (81 07 47); in Fuerteventura: General Franco s/n, Puerto del Rosario (85 08 45).

Look out too for *Viajes Melia*, *Viajes Marsans* and *Wagons-Lits/Cook*, all with several branches.

Buses

For the really independent traveller there's a public transport system linking the towns, airports and major tourist areas, though schedules are skimpy to say the least in the small islands. The Canary Islanders call their buses *guaguas* (pronounced wah-wahs) but *autobus* is usually understood. The vehicles themselves range from comfortable long-distance coaches to tatty old rattletraps, mostly displaying the final destination on the front. Their prices are reasonable and once you learn the ropes it's an excellent way to get around. Board the bus by the front door, pay the driver (*ida* – single, *ida y vuelta* – return) and hang on to your ticket in case an inspector asks to see it. Timetables vary; there may be six buses an hour in the cities but only one a day in the remoter parts, and Sunday/holiday buses tend to be less frequent. Note also that in Gran Canaria and Tenerife there are fast direct buses between cities and popular tourist areas (e.g. between Las Palmas and Maspalomas);

look for the sign *Directo* or *Express*, otherwise the bus stops at every lamp post en route.

The tourist offices will supply up-to-date information, but it's wise to check with the driver/conductor, or with the ticket office if you're starting at the terminus. A rough guide to services within each island is given below.

Gran Canaria

Bus routes are centred on Las Palmas. City buses run on various routes between Plaza de Cervantes (near the fishing port) and Barranco Guiniguada in the south of town. Country buses start from Calle Rafael Cabrera, near the Parque de San Telmo. The airport bus starts from the Iberia offices (León y Castillo 253).

To/From	Frequency (weekdays)	Approx price of single (ptas)
Agaete	3 daily	130
Agüimes	2 x hour	120
Airport	2 x hour	30
Arucas	3 x hour	60
Gáldar	1 x hour	100
Maspalomas (direct)	2 x hour	180
Maspalomas (via S. Agustín & Playa del Inglés)	4 x hour	180
Mogán	6 daily	300
Moya	1 x hour	85
Puerto de las Nieves	4 daily	140
Puerto Rico	2 x hour	250
San Agustín (direct)	2 x hour	180
San Mateo	2 x hour	70
San Nicolas	3 daily	250
Santa Brígida (via Tafira Alta & Monte)	2 x hour	45
Santa Brígida (via Tafira Baja & Angostura)	1 x hour	50
Tejeda	4 daily	150
Telde	6 x hour	60
Teror	1 x hour	65

Tenerife

In Santa Cruz de Tenerife, the main bus terminals are in Plaza de España and Calle Tomé Cano. Buses to San Andrés leave from the Avenida de Anaga. The Reina Sofía Airport bus leaves from the Iberia office in Avenida de Anaga (journey time: 1-1½ hours). In Puerto de la Cruz the bus station is in Avenida Carrero Blanco. Most buses in Tenerife are operated by TITSA from whom information on exact schedules may be obtained (Polígono Industrial Costa Sur; tel. 22 71 21; open 8 am – 2 pm weekdays).

To/From Santa Cruz	**Frequency (weekdays)**	**Approx price of single (ptas)**
Airport (Reina Sofía)	2 x hour	200
Airport (Los Rodeos)	2 x hour	80
Puerto de la Cruz (direct)	2 x hour	150
Puerto de la Cruz (via Tacoronte)	2 x hour	150
Icod de los Viños	8 daily	260
Adeje	2 daily	300
Los Cristianos, Playa de las Américas	1 x hour	300
Médano, Granadilla	6 daily	200
Médano, Las Galletas	2 daily	200
Candelaria	1 x hour	75
La Laguna	6 x hour	45
Arona	2 daily	300
Güímar	1 x hour	100
San Andrés (Las Teresitas beach)	4 x hour	40
To/From Puerto de la Cruz		
La Orotava	3 x hour	40
Jardín Botánico (gardens)	2 x hour	40
Los Realejos	1 x hour	40
Icod de los Viños	2 x hour	75
To/From Icod de los Vinos		
Buenavista (via Garachico)	1 x hour	100
San Juan de la Rambla	6 daily	75
San Marcos	1 x hour	25

Lanzarote

Three bus services link Arrecife with the north, centre and south of the island respectively. The bus station is on Calle Garcia Escaures, leading

north-west out of Arrecife. To the north: Teguise and Maguez (about 5 buses a day); in the centre: Tinajo and Sóo (6 and 3 respectively); to the south: Yaiza (4) and Puerto Carmen/Playa de los Pocillos (5).

Fuerteventura

In Puerto del Rosario the bus station is in Calle Alfonso XIII. Again there are three bus lines, north, centre and south. North: Corralejo via Tetir and La Oliva (2 a day) and Cotillo (1 a day). South: Gran Tarajal via Casillas del Angel, Antigua and Tuineje (2 a day) and to El Jandía, the southern peninsula, via Antigua, Tuineje, Gran Tarajala and Tarajalejo (1 a day). Centre: Betancuria and Pajara (once a week only, on Saturdays).

La Palma

In Santa Cruz de La Palma, the buses leave from either of two points: Avenida Marítima (near the Parador) or Avenida Blas Pérez González. There are fairly frequent buses around the neighbouring villages and 'microbuses' running less frequently to outlying areas.

Gomera

From San Sebastián, one bus serves all of the following places: Valle Gran Rey, Alajero, Hermigua, Agulo, Vallehermoso, Arure, Playa Santiago. The return bus does not reach the capital until the next day.

Hierro

One bus meets the twice-weekly ferryboat and takes passengers from Puerto Estaca to Valverde. Other buses (one each a day) link Valverde with Sabinosa, Tamaduste and Tabaique. You can always walk...

4 Where to Stay

Self catering, p49 Camping, p49 Hotels, Apartments, Hotels and Guest Houses in the Canary Islands, p49

Accommodation in the Canaries ranges from luxury hotels to campsites, covering the whole scale of prices and facilities. In Tenerife and Gran Canaria the choice is enormous, but there's less of a selection in the small islands. Hotels are graded by a star system, 5 stars luxurious, 1 star unpretentious, as are *hostales* (guest houses, graded 1 to 3 stars) and the few *pensiones* (boarding houses, also graded 1 to 3 stars). Every establishment has a sign outside the entrance indicating its star status: H means hotel, HA apartment hotel, HR residential hotel, H with a little s above it means *hostal*, and R means residential only (i.e no meals served except sometimes breakfast). In a 5 star hotel you can expect every possible facility, with private bathrooms taken for granted; 3 star hotels and *hostales* have a private bath or shower; in a 1 star *hostal* or *pension* you have to queue in the corridor. The table below gives a rough idea of prices per night for a double room with a bath; single rooms are usually about 30% cheaper.

Double room + bath	**With breakfast only**	**Full board**
5 star hotel	£38/US$70	£55/US$100
3 star hotel	£13/US$23	£20/US$36
2 star *hostal*	£6/US$11	£9/US$17

Since there is no real 'high season' in the Canaries these prices apply most of the year, though some hotels raise the rates by about 15% between December and March. Similarly, advance reservations are particularly necessary during these winter months.

Most hotels here date from the late 1960s or '70s, and are modern and comfortable. Some of the most attractive are the government-owned *paradores* (inns) of which there are presently five in the Canaries (see lists below), characterized by picturesque situation and harmonious architecture; all are highly recommended. Their restaurants are open to all-comers.

Self-Catering

Apartment hotels and villa/apartment complexes are confined to Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Lanzarote and Fuerteventura, where the tourist developments possess the appropriate shopping and leisure facilities. Many travel agencies arrange excellent packages comprising flights plus apartment/villa as a cheaper and more independent alternative to hotel accommodation; it's a relatively new idea and catching on fast in these islands – so fast that land and property prices are soaring. Some apartment hotels (AH) are included in the lists below, but for fuller details of self-catering accommodation, apply to your travel agent or to one of the specialists such as OSL (Owners Service Limited) in Britain: OSL House, Broxbourne, Hoddesden, Herts; tel. Hoddesden 67233. In the Canaries themselves many estate agents have holiday lettings on their books and there are several villa-holiday companies, such as Lanzarote Villas (UK address: 37 East Street, Horsham, Sussex; tel. Horsham 51304;) Lanzarote address: Plaza San Antonio, Playa de los Pocillos, tel. 82 60 20), who will organize flights as well as villa/bungalow/apartment accommodation of a very high standard.

Camping

There are only two official campsites in the islands, both in Gran Canaria (Temisas, near Agüimes, and Guantánamo, near Mogán), though this does not deter visitors from 'wild' camping. Permission should be sought from the local tourist office, who can sometimes recommend suitable places, usually hedged around with warnings about fire risk and water problems.

Hotels, Apartment Hotels and Guest Houses in the Canary Islands

What follows is an island-by-island selection of *some* accommodation; tourist offices can provide a much fuller list. (5 indicates 5 star, etc. H –

hotel. AH – apartment hotel. HR – residential hotel. HS – hostal/guest house.)

TENERIFE
Santa Cruz de Tenerife

5 H	Mencey, José Naveiras 38 (27 67 00)
4 H	Bruja, Avenida de Belgica (22 62 43)
4 H	Parque, Méndez Nuñez 38 (24 44 90)
3 HA	Colón Rambla, Viera y Clavijo 49 (27 25 50)
3 HA	Plaza, Plaza de la Candelaria (24 75 87)
3 HR	Diplomático, Antonio Nebrija 6 (22 39 41)
3 HS	Capitol, San Sebastián 62 (21 60 00)
2 H	Anaga, Imeldo Seris 19 (24 50 90)
2 HR	Pelinor, Bethencourt Alfonso 8 (24 68 75)
2 HR	Taburiente, Dr Guigou 25 (27 60 00)
2 HR	Tamaide, General Franco 118 (27 71 00)
2 HS	Miramar, Avenida de Anaga 5 (28 76 50)
2 HS	Padron, General Mola 114 (22 28 76)
1 HR	Astoria, Emilio, Calzadilla 7 (24 51 05)
1 HS	Plaza, Plaza de la Iglesia 14 (24 14 36)

Puerto de la Cruz

5 H	Botanico, Avenida Richard J. Yeoward (38 14 00)
5 H	Loro Parque, La Hacienda (38 04 10)
5 H	San Felipe, Avenida de Colón 13 (37 11 40)
5 H	Ybarra Semiramis, Leopoldo Cologan 12 (37 31 27)
4 H	Atalaya Grand, Parque Taoro (37 23 12)
4 H	Atlantis, Playa Martiánez (37 31 00)
4 H	Concordia Playa, Avenida del Generalísimo 3 (37 31 12)
4 H	Florida, Avenida Blas Pérez González (38 13 04)
4 H	La Paz, Urbanización La Paz (3 19 41)
4 H	Martiánez, Avenida del Generalísimo 19 (38 06 00)
4 H	Melia, Avenida Marqués de Villanueva (37 00 30)
4 H	Parque San Antonio, Carretera de las Arenas (37 17 46)
4 H	Ybarra Valle Mar, Avenida de Colón 2 (37 15 43)
4 H	Tigaiga, Parque Taoro 16 (37 11 90)
3 H	Don Juan, Puerto Viejo/Old Port (37 20 47)
3 H	Ikarus, Urbanización La Paz (37 25 45)
3 H	Miramar, Parque Taoro (37 15 90)
3 H	Monopol, Quintana 15 (37 13 46)

3 H	San Borondón, Puerto Viejo/Old Port (37 16 47)
3 HA	Belair, Valois 18 (37 12 40)
3 HA	Masaru, Urbanización La Paz (38 08 20)
3 HA	Martina, Avenida del Generalísimo 1 (37 14 92)
3 HR	Colon, Urbanización La Paz (37 29 45)
3 HR	Haral, José Antonio 3 (37 22 41)
3 HR	Tropical, Plaza General Franco 9 (37 21 44)
3 HR	Xibana Park, Valois 25 (37 02 63)
2 H	Marquesa, Quintana 11 (37 14 46)
2 H	Oro Negro, Avenida de Colón 14 (37 18 42)
2 HR	Bélgica, Avenida de Colón 14 (37 16 44)
2 HR	Capricho, San Fernando 4 (37 13 90)
2 HS	Arosa, Esquivel 10 (37 18 37)
2 HS	Los Geranios, Lomo 21 (38 28 10)
2 HS	Marbella, Lomo 30 (38 23 74)
2 HS	Plaza, Plaza General Franco 11 (37 23 42)
1 HR	Bambi, El Lomito (37 12 90)
1 HR	Bananas, San Borondón (37 28 90)
1 HR	Las Rocas, Puerto Viejo 48 (37 19 92)
1 HR	Rosa Mari, San Felipe 16 (37 15 42)
1 HS	Corales, Corales 5 (37 15 00)

Playa de las Américas, Los Cristianos, Costa del Silencio

4 H	Gran Tinerfe, Playa de las Américas (79 12 00)
4 H	Europa, Playa de las Américas (79 13 08)
3 H	Belroy, Los Cristianos (73 03 70)
3 H	Park Hotel Troya, Playa de las Américas (79 01 00)
3 HA	Jardín Tropical, Urbanización San Eugenio (79 07 70)
3 HA	Ponderosa, Playa de las Américas (79 02 04)
3 HA	Oro Negro, Playa de las Américas (73 06 24)
3 HA	Princesa Dacil, Los Cristianos (79 08 00)
2 HA	Borinquen, Playa de las Américas (79 11 00)
2 HA	Ten-Bel, Las Galletas (78 50 50)
2 HS	Reveron, Los Cristianos (79 06 00)
3 HA	El Chaparral, Costa del Silencio (78 07 51)
3 HA	Floral, Playa Paraiso, Adeje (78 07 51)
3 HA	Faro, Porís de Abona (70 60 50)

Bajamar

4 H	Nautilus, Avenida de las Piscinas 2 (54 05 00)
3 H	Delfin Laguna, La Cornisa (54 02 00)

Candelaria
3 HA Los Geranios (38 28 10)

El Médano
3 H Médano (70 40 00)

Las Cañadas (Mount Teide)
2 H Parador Nacional Cañadas del Teide (33 23 04)

Puerto Santiago
4 H Los Gigantes (86 71 25)

GOMERA
3 H Parador Nacional de la Gomera, San Sebastián (87 11 00)
2 HS Garajonay, Ruiz de Padrón 17, San Sebastián (87 05 50)
2 HR Canarias, Ruiz de Padrón 5, San Sebastián (87 03 55)
2 HR La Castellana, Hermigua (88 00 08)
1 HS Hesperides, Ruiz de Padrón 32, San Sebastián (87 13 05)

HIERRO
2 HS Kai Marino, Puerto de la Restinga, Frontera (-)
1 HS Casañas, San Francisco, Valverde (55 02 54)
1 HS Morales, Licenciado Bueno 7, Valverde (55 01 62)
1 HS Amaya, El Paso, Vallehermoso (80 00 73)

LA PALMA
3 H Parador Nacional de Santa Cruz, Avenida Blas Pérez González, Sta Cruz (41 23 40)
3 H Mayantigo, Alvarez Abreu 8, Santa Cruz (41 17 40)
2 H San Miguel, Avenida José Antonio 31, Santa Cruz (41 12 43)
2 HS Canarias, A. Cabrera Pinto 27, Santa Cruz (41 31 82)
2 HS Bahía, Plaza de la Luz 35, Santa Cruz (41 18 46)
2 P Pensión Vazdekis, Montaña Tenesca, Llanos de Aridane (46 09 67)
1 HR Eden, Plaza de España, Llanos de Aridane (46 01 04)
1 HS Monterrey, Carretera El Paso (48 51 76)

GRAN CANARIA

Las Palmas

5 H	Cristina, Gomera 4 (26 80 50)
5 H	Reina Isabel, Paseo de las Canteras (26 01 00)
5 H	Santa Catalina, Parque Doramas (24 31 40)
4 H	Don Juan, Eduardo Benot 3 (26 61 00)
4 H	Imperial Playa, Ferreras 1 (26 48 54)
4 H	Las Palmas Palace, León y Castillo 414 (26 04 00)
4 HR	Miraflor, Dr Grau Bassas 21 (26 16 00)
4 HR	Tigaday, Ripoche 4 (26 47 20)
3 H	Atlántico, Dr Garcia Castrillo 20 (24 40 40)
3 H	Faycan, Nicolás Estevanez 61 (27 06 50)
3 H	Gran Canaria, Avenida de las Canteras 38 (26 08 00)
3 HR	Astoria Club, Pelayo 18 (26 03 00)
3 HR	Atlanta, Alfredo L. Jones 43 (26 04 58)
3 HR	La Caleta, F. González Díaz 5 (24 34 45)
3 HR	César, Leon Tolstoi 2 (26 46 78)
3 HR	Frandon, General Primo de Rivera 39 (26 07 12)
3 HR	Pinito del Oro, Portugal 30 (26 06 20)
3 HR	Strand, Dr Miguel Rosas 37 (26 47 28)
3 HR	Vila Blanca, Alfredo L. Jones 39 (26 85 09)
3 HS	La Garza, Paseo de las Canteras 31 (26 49 12)
2 HR	Aromas, Faro 1 (26 28 32)
2 HR	Ansite, Juan Rejón 57 (26 36 28)
2 HR	Cactus, Juan Rejón 23 (26 29 00)
2 HR	Canayma, Portugal 73 (26 23 50)
2 HR	Damasco, 29 de Abril 6 (26 18 07)
2 HR	Los Geranios, Paseo Tomas Morales 165 (24 44 45)
2 HR	Nautilus, Paseo de las Canteras 5 (26 32 74)
2 HR	Syria, Luis Morote 27 (27 0600)
2 HS	Las Canteras, Sagasta 84 (26 50 32)
2 HS	Central, General Vives 31 (26 46 62)
2 HS	Cortes, 29 de Abril 58 (26 46 62)
2 HS	Miami Playa, Pelayo II (26 12 20)
2 HS	Playa Mar, Sargento Llagas 20 (26 42 50)
2 HS	Plaza, Luis Morote 16 (26 70 30)
1 HR	Gilton, Juan de Miranda 16 (26 50 74)
1 HR	Insula, Luis Morote 50 (26 50 16)
1 HR	Madrid, Plaza Cairasco 2 (21 71 07)
1 HR	Tamadaiba, Pelayo 19 (26 20 00)
1 HS	Cuba, Perojo 13 (22 02 84)

1 HS Islas Canarias, Buenos Aires 40 (22 00 03)
1 HS Regina, Ripoche 9 (26 42 79)

Caldera de Bandama (Santa Brígida)
3 HR La Posada (35 12 90)

Tejeda, Cruz de
2 H Parador Nacional de Tejeda, 5½ miles from Tejeda (65 80 50)

Maspalomas, Playa del Inglés, San Agustín
5 H Maspalomas Oasis, Maspalomas (76 01 70)
5 H Tamarindos, Las Retamas 3, San Agustín (76 26 00)
4 H Apolo, Playa del Inglés (76 00 58)
4 H Caterina Playa, Maspalomas (76 28 00)
4 H Costa Canaria, San Agustín (76 02 00)
4 H Don Gregory, San Agustín (76 26 58)
4 H Faro, Maspalomas (76 04 62)
4 H Lucana, Playa del Inglés (76 27 00)
4 H Folias, San Agustín (61)
4 H Ifa Dunamar, Playa del Inglés (76 12 00)
4 H Las Margaritas, Playa del Inglés (76 11 00)
4 H Palm Beach, Maspalomas (76 29 00)
4 HR Caserío, Playa del Inglés (76 10 50)
3 H Beverly Park, Playa del Inglés (76 25 00)
3 H Eugenia Victoria, Playa del Inglés (76 17 50)
3 H Parque Tropical, Maspalomas (76 07 12)
3 H Ybarra Don Miguel, Playa del Inglés (25 00 59)
3 H Waikiki, Playa del Inglés (76 23 00)
3 HA Buenaventura Playa, Maspalomas (76 16 50)
2 H Sahara Playa, Playa del Inglés (76 01 62)

FUERTEVENTURA
5 H Ybarra Tres Islas, Playa de Corralejo (86 60 00)
4 H Robinson Club/Jandía Playa, Playa de Jandía (-)
4 H Casa Atlántica, Playa del Matorral, Punta Jandía (87 60 17)
3 HR Las Gabias, Avenida Marítima 3, Puerto del Rosario (85 12 00)
3 HR Maxorata, Tarajalejo-Tuineje (87 00 50)
2 H Parador Nacional, Playa Blanca, Puerto del Rosario (85 11 50)

2 HS	Tamasite, León y Castillo 9, Puerto del Rosario (85 02 80)
1 HS	Fuerteventura, Ruperto González s/n, Puerto del Rosario (85 03 50)

LANZAROTE

5 H	Las Salinas, Maleza de Tahiche, Teguise (81 30 40)
4 H	Arrecife Gran Hotel, Avenida Mancomunidad, Arrecife (81 12 50)
4 H	Los Fariones, Puerto del Carmen (82 51 75)
4 H	San Antonio, Playa de los Pocillos (82 50 50)
3 H	Lancelot Playa, Avenida Mancomunidad, Arrecife (81 14 00)
3 H	Holiday Park, Playa Grande (82 52 50)
3 HR	Miramar, Coll 2, Arrecife (81 26 00)
3 HS	Cardona, 18 de Julio II, Arrecife (81 10 08)
2 HS	Avenida, Avenida Mancomunidad 4, Arrecife (81 16 00)
2 HS	Tamia, Avenida Mancomunidad 10, Arrecife (81 02 50)
1 HS	Alespa, León y Castillo 56, Arrecife (81 17 56)
1 HS	España, Gran Canaria 4, Arrecife (81 11 90)
1 HS	Playa Blanca, Playa Blanca Sur, Yaiza (83 00 46)
1 HS	Playa del Sol, Playa Blanca Sur, Yaiza (83 00 46)

5 Wining, Dining and Nightlife

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The keynote is choice. With the various foreign influences and the continuing growth of tourism here, it's hardly surprising that every taste is catered for – international, Spanish or local. You can of course remain in the hotel, where everything is brought to you on a plate, or you can spend an adventurous few hours every day investigating cafés, bars, restaurants, discotheques, nightclubs etc. Yet again the choice is widest in Tenerife and Gran Canaria, but the other islands are fast catching up.

Cuisine

Canary Island cuisine has, naturally, a distinctly Spanish flavour – olive oil, garlic etc – but with regional differences. These are rarely detectable in hotel menus, which have to supply food that is acceptable to all nationalities and tastes, and most restaurants in major towns and tourist areas similarly aim to please everyone, thereby losing the special something that gratifies the individual palate. If you're wary of the unknown, there is still a good choice between familiar Italian, Indian, Chinese, etc, and good old steak and chips. For regional cooking one has to look further afield.

As in Spain, restaurants are graded into four categories denoted by 'forks' (*tenedores*); four forks being the highest category. Basically this grading reflects merely the prices each restaurant can charge; four forks

is not necessarily a guarantee that the establishment serves better food than the little place down the road. Restaurants offering international and regional cooking are noted below in the text for each island; the smaller islands have relatively few outside hotels. Tourist offices can supply details (or look under *Restaurante* in the telephone directory). Prices are generally much lower than in Britain; a good three-course meal for two can easily be found for less than £12/US$21, though naturally the flasher the restaurant the higher the bill.

As in Spain, meal times tend to be later than North Europeans are used to – Spaniards seldom serve dinner earlier than 8 pm, often as late as 9.30 or 10 pm – but hotels and restaurants have quickly discovered that foreign stomachs need filling sooner than later; most establishments now serve lunch any time from 1 pm on, dinner from 7.30 or 8 pm.

In between meals you can still any disquieting rumbles by sampling *tapas*, those appetizing little snacks that are served in bars. Once upon a time they were an automatic accompaniment to your glass of wine, compliments of the house; now you have to ask for them (and pay). Often quite substantial, they vary from a saucerful of olives (*aceitunas*) to a dish of huge prawns (*gambas*); it can be a very good way to taste some of the local specialities, such as tuna fish and potatoes (*atún con papas*), fried squid (*calamares*), baby octopus (*pulpito*), spicy sausage (*chorizo*) or local ham (*jamón canario*). Cafés and bars also serve *bocadillos*, literally 'little mouthfuls' but actually great crusty rolls with a variety of fillings including *tortilla* (omelette) and cheese (*queso*).

On the Menu. The specialities of local cuisine are *papas* (potatoes; sometimes cooked in their skins in salt water and called *papas arrugadas*, 'wrinkled potatoes'), *gofío*, which is flour made from ground roasted maize or other cereal and used a lot in soups, sauces and batter, and *mojo picón* or *mojo verde*, the former being a fiery hot sauce, the latter generally milder. *Mojo* is made with oil, vinegar, salt and spices and is a common ingredient in many typical dishes of the region, particularly served with fish and vegetables. Fish, shellfish and vegetables are the commonest items on the menu, and fresh fruit is the usual dessert, with bananas winning hands down. Meat is generally imported and therefore more expensive, though home-grown pork, rabbit and poultry are the basis of many local dishes. Familiar Spanish dishes often appear on the table – *gazpacho*, *paella*, *tortilla* (omelette, either *francesa* in the usual fashion or *española* with potatoes, onions and other vegetables) – but some of the regional specialities to sample are listed below.

Soups: *sopa de arroz con pescado* (rice soup with fish); *sopa verde* ('green soup', made with parsley for that green colour, eggs and bread);

caldo de pescado (fish soup); *potaje* (a tasty filling broth, usually containing vegetables, lentils or chickpeas); *sopa de berros* (with watercress and herbs).

Fish: *cazuela canaria* (fish casserole, with potatoes, onions, tomatoes and peppers); *sanchocho canario* (fish served with *papas arrugadas, mojo picón* and *gofío*); also numerous fish dishes served with the 'wrinkled potatoes' and hot sauce – *bacalao* (cod), *cherne* (rock bass), *merluza* (hake), *caballa* (mackerel), *espada* (swordfish).

Meat and poultry: *chuletas de cerdo* (pork chops); *estofado de conejo* (rabbit stew); *pollo assado* (roast chicken); *cabrito barrado* (roast kid, a very special speciality on festive occasions); *callos* (tripe) and *sesos* (brains) are also fairly common.

Dessert: as well as fruit (*frutas*) and ice cream (*helados*) and the Spanish *flan* (caramel custard) and *torta* (gateau or tart), local specialities include *quesadilla* (cheesecake made from goats' cheese, a typical dish in Hierro), *torta de cuajada* and *torta vilana* (in Gomera); *sopa de miel* (literally 'honey soup', a typical dish of la Palma), *miel de palma* (date palm syrup used in tarts or as a dip for spongecakes).

Cheese: (*queso*) includes the *queso blanco de cabra* made from goats' milk, a particular dish of Fuerteventura. You may also come across various *turrones*, a sort of Spanish nougat; the local variety is *turrón de miel y gofío*, with honey and *gofío*; other local sweets are *mazapanes*, little marzipan cakes typical of Gran Canaria, and *bienmesabes* made with eggs and coconut.

Coffee after a meal is usually a small cup of *café solo* (black)l if it is too strong for your taste many establishments offer sachets of instant coffee (ask for *un nescafé*) with a jug of hot water.

See also Appendix I for further restaurant and menu vocabulary.

Wine and Drinks

To the despair of both *Canarios* and visitors, the local wine is usually more expensive than wine from mainland Spain and less frequently sold. All the islands produce their own wines, the best is said to be *Vino del Monte* from Gran Canaria and Lanzarote's *malvasia*. Tenerife is famous for *malvasia* and *moscatel*, Hierro for its *vino dulce* (sweet), La Palma for *malvasia* again, etc. Generally the wine is sweet, with a distinctive flavour thanks to the islands' rich volcanic soil. Both red and white wines are produced. *Malvasia*, or malmsey, is the most famous, similar to Madeira wine, and comes in medium sweet, sweet and very sweet, though drier varieties are commonly served as an aperitif; *moscatel*, tasting of raisins, is usually very sweet.

If the wine is a slight disappointment, try the *ron* and *ron miel* (rum, honey rum) often used as a base for a *cuba libre* (rum and Coca-Cola); the neat stuff is very popular among the locals but often too rough for sophisticated palates. Various liqueurs, made from bananas (of course!), oranges, pineapples, pomegranates, cherries and virtually anything fruity, tend to be extremely sweet, but they can grow on you.

Many visitors never get around to sampling these local drinks, so overwhelmed are they by the cheapness and availability of whisky (Irish, Scotch, Bourbon), gin, vodka, brandy and every other pet tipple from all parts of the world. Whatever your favourite brand, you can be sure to find it in the Canaries, and, thanks to the duty-free status of the islands, usually at a far cheaper price than back home. Beer (*cerveza*) is the exception, but Spanish bottled varieties such as San Miguel are compensation for this oversight: light, cool and refreshing, they are much more suited to these subtropical climates than what comes foaming out of the tap in an English pub (though *that* is available here too). Soft drinks are often the brand you're used to (Coca-Cola and Pepsi included, naturally) and local mineral waters to try are Firgas and San Roque.

Nightlife

The two provincial capitals, Las Palmas and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, and all the big resorts can provide anything from sophisticated night-clubs and gambling rooms to scores of lively bars and pavement cafés. If your Spanish is up to it, you can even keep up the bingo practice. In smaller towns and villages, the choice is usually between a quiet drink and a walk on the beach.

Most big hotels lay on nightly entertainment which non-residents can also attend; this might be the hotel's own nightclub, a barbecue, or a display of folk dancing, flamenco from Andalusia or Can-Can chorus girls, even a film show once or twice a week.

Nightclubs and Discotheques. Lively or muted, brash or sedate, casual or elegant, there's such a wide field to choose from that no one need feel left out – but by the same token there are too many to list here. Some are included in the section on nightlife for each island (see below), others can be found by touring the streets after dark or by popping into the tourist office. Most people instinctively gravitate to what suits them by simply picking a likely-looking place and going in; if it is too crowded/too loud/too expensive, there is bound to be an alternative next door. Watch

for the neon signs: a *discoteca* provides modern music and a dance floor; *salas de fiesta* (nightclubs) cover a wider range of live entertainment from artless Elvis imitations to sophisticated cabaret.

Folklore. Apart from the roaming troupes of folk singers and dancers which visit hotels and nightclubs, the best place to enjoy an evening's *espectáculo folklórico* is in Las Palmas: the Bodegón del Pueblo Canario (Parque Doramas) has regular displays twice a week. For details, ask the Las Palmas Tourist Offices.

Bars and Pubs. The Canaries are a haven for social drinkers from all parts of the world, thanks partly to the cheapness of drink and partly to the Spanish fondness for impromptu merry-making. Again, there are far too many to list here, and anyway you will soon find a few favourites of your own, but the selection below gives some idea of the variety and international flavour to be found in the two main islands.

In Tenerife (a) Santa Cruz:

Atlantico (Plaza España), a grand place to sit out in the evening air and watch the *paseo*, the colourful to-and fro of passers-by.
Nilo (Méndez Nuñez 48), a Hawaian bar, serving elaborate tropical cocktails.
Meson Tagoror (Plaza Patriotismo), for a typical atmosphere and good tapas.
Caribean Center (Viera y Clavijo 7), good for charcuterie and wines.
Hollywood (San Vincente Ferrer 31), a 'disco-pub'.

(b) Puerto de la Cruz:

El Guanche (Parque Taoro, opposite Hotel Atalaya), typical bar-res taurant and guitar music and rustic decor.
La Fontana (in Hotel Orotava Garden), cocktails and elegance.
The Coach and Horses (Calle Valois 49), with a traditional British pub atmosphere.
Murphy's (San Telmo, corner of Santo Domingo), with Guinness, Irish coffee and all.
El Escondite/The Hideaway (Iriarte 46), a wine bar.
McTavish's (in arcade below street level, off Avenida Generalisimo). Tartan beer and tartan decor.

In Gran Canaria (a) Las Palmas:

Café Bar Julio (La Naval 132), a local favourite, great for tapas.
Derby (Parque Santa Catalina), outdoor bar-café with lots around to watch.
Nostalgia (Salvador Cuyas 10), in a fine old house with great atmosphere and occasional live music.
Captain's Cabin (Playa de las Canteras).
Lord Nelson (Sagasta 43, near las Canteras), like the one above, near the sea and fresh evening breezes; a bar-disco with marine decor and relaxed atmosphere.

(b) In the south:

Los Colegios (in shopping centre off Avenida de Tenerife, Playa del Inglés). Lively, noisy and friendly.
Loopy's Tavern (Avenida de las Retamas, San Agustín). 'Western' decor mixed with old posters. A bar-café.
Los Jamones (Avenida de Gran Canaria, Playa del Inglés), a *bodega* or wine bar in the local style.
Champion Pub (Kasbah, Playa del Inglés).
Tenis Bar (Rocas Rojas, San Agustin).

Gambling. The two main casinos are in Puerto de la Cruz (Tenerife) and at the Hotel Tamarindos near Maspalomas (southern Gran Canaria). Both generally open around 8 or 9 pm and close at 3 or 4 am – plenty of time for visitors to lose a peseta or two at roulette (French or American), blackjack, baccarat, or chemin-de-fer. A passport is essential, a jacket and tie virtually so.
In Tenerife: Casino Taoro, Parque Taoro, Puerto de la Cruz.
In Gran Canaria: Casino Gran Canaria, Hotel Tamarindos, Playa San Agustín.

Theatre, Concerts, Cinema. Both Las Palmas and Santa Cruz de Tener ife have some more cultural entertainment in the form of drama, opera or classical music. In Las Palmas the Teatro Pérez Galdós (Lentini 1) has an annual opera season in February/March and various other events throughout the year. In Santa Cruz the Teatro Guimera (Plaza Santo Domingo) has its own symphony orchestra, joined by visiting soloists, with a regular programme of concerts. (For details of what's on, watch the local press or ask at the tourist offices.)

Lanzarote also has a theatre auditorium – part of a new construction in the extraordinary caves of Los Jameos del Agua, where the natural

acoustics are apparently excellent. Concerts and dramatic events take place here at sporadic intervals; ask at the Tourist Office in Arrecife (or in Las Palmas) for further information.

All the islands have cinemas; the provincial capitals usually show up-to-date films, often American but dubbed into Spanish, while the smaller towns seem to enjoy constant re-runs of old favourites. Buy a local newspaper to see what's showing (*cine* is the word for cinema).

6 Miscellanea

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Money

The unit of currency in the Canaries is the Spanish peseta (abbreviated to 'pta'), divided into 100 céntimos though these are seldom found nowadays except in the 10 and 50 céntimo coins. Five pesetas are sometimes called *un duro*. Banknotes include 100, 500, 1,000 and 5,000 pta; coins are mostly 1, 2½, 5, 25 and 50 pta.

Banks. All the big towns and holiday resorts have banks (*bancos*) and exchange bureaux (*cambios*); many hotels and travel agencies will also change travellers cheques, though invariably charging a higher commission than the banks. Bank hours: open Monday to Saturday, 9 am to 2 pm. Bank holidays are the same as public holidays (see below).

Credit Cards. These are widely accepted in areas where travellers most often go, whether on business or on holiday – hotels, car-hire agencies, travel agencies, many restaurants and shops will take the usual range of Access, Barclaycard/Visa, Diners Club, American Express etc. But in more out-of-the-way places you just have to have pesetas.

Health

There are presently no inoculation requirements for anyone entering the Canaries, and you need fear no nasty endemic diseases here, or poi-

sonous reptile. Apart from the possibility of self-induced ailments arising from over-indulgence or over-exposure, you're unlikely to suffer from anything worse than a sting from some nasty *bicho* (bug). All the same, wise travellers are the ones who come prepared with medical insurance; anyone can have the misfortune to break a leg and hospital costs here are high. The two provincial capitals, Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Las Palmas, both have good hospitals. Las Palmas also has the English Hospital (Hospital Inglés, Paseo de la Cornisa, tel. 25 42 43) and the British and American Clinic (Calle Sagasta 5, tel. 26 45 38).

Problems

If a quiet word with your hotel receptionist doesn't work, try the local tourist office; they've heard it all before – 'I've lost my diamond necklace/my little Willy. . .' 'Where can I hire a grand piano?' 'Who's the local Suzuki parts dealer?' Their patience and well of information is bottomless. If necessary, go to the police (*policía municipal*). They are unfailingly courteous to visitors and they too are well accustomed to the common problems that people run into.

For problems over accommodation, there is a system which requires all tourist establishments to supply *Hojas de Reclamaciones* (Complaints Forms); if the hotel is 'out of them', the tourist office will surely have some.

And, in cases of near catastrophe like losing a passport, there are British and American consulates in the two provincial capitals:

British Consulates: Consulado Británico, Edificio Marichal, Suarez Guerra 40-5°, Santa Cruz de Tenerife (24 20 00); Consulado Británico, Alfredo L. Jones 33-6°, Las Palmas (26 25 08).

American Consulates: Consulado do los Estados Unidos de America, General Primo de Rivera 5-5°, Las Palmas (27 12 59); Consulado de los Estados Unidos, Alvarez de Lugo 10, Santa Cruz de Tenerife (28 69 50).

Emergencies. Some emergency phone numbers are listed below:

	Las Palmas	**Santa Cruz Tf**
Fire	24 31 00	22 00 80
Hospital	31 30 33	24 15 02
Police	36 11 66	091

Tourist Information

The Spanish National Tourist Office can provide advice, information and literature about the Canaries before you leave home. Their main offices are listed below.

(a) *in the UK:* 57 St James's Street, London S.W.1 (01-499 0901).
(b) *in the USA:* 665 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10022 (212-759 8822); 664 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill. 60611 (312-944 0215); 3160 Lyon Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94123 (415-346 8100).
(c) *in Canada:* 60 Bloor Street West, Suite 201, Toronto, Ont. M4W 1A1 (415-961 3131).

On the spot information is available at any *Oficina de Información y Turismo*. The two provincial capitals' offices have information not only on their own islands but also on other islands within the province. *Las Palmas:* Casa del Turismo, Parque Santa Catalina (26 46 23). *Santa Cruz de Tenerife:* Palacio Insular, Plaza de Espana (24 22 27). Tenerife also has an efficient tourist office in Puerto de la Cruz (Plaza de la Iglesia, opposite the church), and Lanzarote has its own tourist office on the waterfront in Arrecife (Avenida Generalisimo).

Post Office, Telephone, Telegrams

Almost every big town has its *Correos* or Post Office, usually open Monday to Saturday, and stamps (*sellos*) can also be bought at tobacconists. Present prices (1981): postcards (*postales*) to UK and Europe 20 pta, to North America 20 pta; letter (*cartas*) to UK and Europe 30 pta, to North America 40 pta. Post boxes are silver with red-yellow-red stripes like the Spanish flag; the slot marked *Estranjero* is for foreign mail. If you want to use the poste restante service, have your correspondence addressed to you at *Lista de Correos* plus the name of the town; remember to take your passport for identification purposes when you collect the mail.

The main post offices in the provincial capitals are: Avenida Generalísimo Franco 62, Las Palmas, and Plaza de España, Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

These offices have telephones but most do not; to make a phone call outside your hotel it is necessary to find a phone booth, usually a glass cage marked *Teléfono*, or use the public phones in restaurants and cafés.

Supply yourself in advance with plenty of coins; the machines fairly gobble them. Many phone booths now have English instructions, and there is an informative English section in the green pages of the telephone directory. A reversed-charge call is *cobro revertido*, and a person-to-person call is *persona a persona*.

Telegrams (*telegramas*) can be sent either from the *Correos* or sometimes from a separate building – ask for the *Telegrafos*. Telex facilities are also available in the main post offices.

Hours

Bank hours are noted above. **Shops, chemists and most commercial establishments** are normally open six days a week from 9 am to 1 or 2 pm, and 3.30 or 4 till 7 or 9 pm. **Tourist offices** follow similar hours, sometimes also opening on Sundays. **Museums** and other monuments have their own hours (see text for details). **Bars and cafés** seem never to close, while most **restaurants** are open daily between noon and midnight.

NB: The Canaries follow Greenwich Mean Time, with Daylight Saving Time (i.e. clocks go forward one hour) operational between late March and September.

Public Holidays

In addition to the local fiestas (see below, listed separately under each island), banks and shops etc are closed for the following national holidays:

1 January	New Year's Day (*Año Nuevo*)
6 January	Epiphany (*Epifania*)
19 March	St Joseph's Day (*Dia de San José*)
March/April	Maundy Thursday & Good Friday (*Semana Santa*)
1 May	Labour Day (*Dia del Trabajo*)
May/June	Ascension Day (*Ascención*)
May/June	Corpus Christi
15 August	Feast of the Assumption (*Asunción*)
12 October	National Day (*Dia de la Hispanidad*)
1 November	All Saint's Day (*Todos los Santos*)
8 December	Immaculate Conception (*Inmaculada Concepción*)
25 December	Christmas Day (*Navidad*)

Shopping

The two cities of Las Palmas and Santa Cruz de Tenerife are marvellous shopping centres, especially for the duty-free imported goods – cheap spirits, tobacco, perfume, cameras, watches, electronic and digital doo-dahs, furs (in this climate!), all your favourite brands and more. The variety is stunning. Numerous Indian, Chinese and other Oriental shops sell fine silks and precious gems, ivory figurines and silver trinkets. Specialist stores sell good leather coats and accessories (Spain is famous for the quality of her leather goods), stylish shoes, charming children's clothes, etc. No wonder the mainland Spanish come over here in hordes on shopping expeditions.

Canary Island Specialities. The most famous local craft is embroidery (*bordados*), especially the drawn-thread work produced by women working at home; intricate and beautiful, it adorns everything from handkerchiefs to bedlinen, blouses to evening dresses. La Palma and Gomera are the two islands particularly noted for their distinctive designs. La Palma is also the centre of the archipelago's silk-producing industry, and colourful embroidered silk shawls and headscarves are on sale everywhere. Weaving (*tejido*) is another home-made speciality; tourists are often taken to silk, linen or wool-weaving centres to watch the manual looms being worked and to browse among the finished articles.

Pottery (*cerámica*) is another typically Canary Island craft, particularly the red clay replicas of primitive Guanche pots, some of them bearing roughly incised patterns or painted designs. The main pottery centres are in Chipude (Gomera), La Atalaya (Gran Canaria), and Hoyo de Mazo (La Palma).

Basketwork (*cesteria*) in the Canaries typically uses palm leaves or reeds as well as cane; such articles are made in various parts of Tenerife and Gran Canaria, also in La Palma and Hierro.

Other souvenirs that people like to carry off home include wood carvings (statuettes, knife handles, chess pieces) local cigars or *puros* (Canary Island tobacco is said to equal that of Havana in taste and quality); liqueurs of banana or cactus; flowers, especially strelitzias/bird of paradise flowers, which are long-lasting and easily survive the flight home.

Food for Self-Caterers. Fresh fish, vegetables, fruit are best obtained at local markets (see text below) where you can handle the goods and

compare prices of neighbouring stalls. Supermarkets and minimarkets abound in the main holiday areas. Local produce is relatively inexpensive, but imported food (your favourite brand of cornflakes or teabags, for example) and meat tend to be rather dear; it's only the luxury goods that are real bargains.

Churches

The Canary Islanders belong to the Roman Catholic faith but there are Anglican Churches in both Tenerife and Gran Canaria, and Evangelical and other services take place occasionally in the main resorts.
In Tenerife: St George's Church, Plaza 25 de Julio, Santa Cruz; All Saint's Church, Parque Taoro, Puerto de la Cruz.
In Gran Canaria: Holy Trinity Church, Rafael Ramirez, Las Palmas.

Sport

The widest range of sports facilities is to be found in Gran Canaria and Tenerife and concentrated in tourist resorts. What follows is just a brief selection of what's available; for details apply to the tourist offices.

Swimming. Those warm sea temperatures and the numerous beaches (*playas*) make this a great place for swimming. Gomera and La Palma are short of beaches, but the other islands have plenty, especially in the south. Some are small and rocky, some have black or reddish volcanic sand, others are vast stretches of gold, the stuff that sunbathers' dreams are made of. The city of Las Palmas has its own fine white long beach (Playa de las Canteras) and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, not to be outdone, has imported thousands of tons of golden Sahara sand to construct an artificial beach where there was only shingle before; this man-made wonder 5 miles from the capital is now an established, natural-looking beach called Las Teresitas, near the fishing port of San Andrés.

Most big hotels have their own pools, and there are public pools (*piscinas municipales*) in Santa Cruz de Tenerife and elsewhere, notably the architect designed leisure complex of Lago Martiánez in Puerto de la Cruz.

Watersports. Every island except Hierro has a yacht club, for **sailing** is a popular sport with locals and visitors alike. In Tenerife the sailing community welcomes visitors at the Real Club Náutico (Carretera de San Andrés, Santa Cruz) and at the Club La Galera in Candelaria. In

Gran Canaria the sailing centre is the Club Náutico in Las Palmas (León y Castillo).

Waterskiing can be arranged through some hotels and many specialist agencies who also hire out boats for fishing or trips round the coast, equipment for **sub-aqua swimming** and even **windsurfing.** These agencies are mainly in the tourist *urbanizaciones* of southern Tenerife (Los Cristianos, Playa de las Américas) and southern Gran Canaria (Puerto Rico, Maspalomas), with similar facilities in the Jandía resorts of Fuerteventura and round the Los Pocillos/Playa Blanca area of Lanzarote.

Tennis. Again, many hotels have their own tennis courts, sometimes with professional instructors if you feel your backhand needs strengthening. There are dozens of clubs, often with swimming pools too, and public courts in the modern tourist complexes. The *clubs de tenis* are usually happy to accept temporary members; in Tenerife, for example, you could apply to join the 'Outdoor Games Club' (Club Inglés, San Antonio, Santa Cruz).

Golf. Tenerife and Gran Canaria both have excellent 18-hole courses open all year round. The Club de Golf de Tenerife is at El Peñón, about 10 miles from Santa Cruz, 14 miles from Puerto. There is a bar restaurant here and a bus service from the capital; clubs and carts may be rented. For details write to the Club at Apartado 125, La Laguna, Tenerife
(tel. 25 02 40).

Gran Canaria has several courses. The long-established Club de Golf de Las Palmas (Apartado 183, Las Palmas; tel. 35 10 50) is at Bandama, 9 miles from the capital. As well as bar plus restaurant, the Club also has its own accommodation; guests pay half the regular green fees. There are also two 18-hole courses at the Campo de Golf Maspalomas (write to Paseo de Chil 282, Las Palmas; tel. 24 62 46), 34 miles south of the capital, sharing one clubhouse, bar and restaurant.

Riding. There are several riding schools, mainly in Gran Canaria and Tenerife, where visitors can take lessons or hire a mount; in Gran Canaria at the Bandama Golf Club (see above), at the Picadero del Oasis Maspalomas and at the Escuela de Equitación, Hoya del Sabinal (off the road between Marzagan and Tafira); in Tenerife at El Club Hípico La Atalaya, near Los Rodeos Airport, and at El Club Hípico Tinerfeno in Guamasa, Tacoronte.

Ice-skating. There is an ice rink in Las Palmas at the Palacio del Hielo, Avenida de Escaleritas 31, where skates may be hired.

Local Sports. The favourite local sport is **football,** here as in other parts of Spain, with several local teams in the national league tables; most towns have a football field but the big stadiums are in Las Palmas and Santa Cruz de Tenerife. **Basketball** is popular among the young, taking place mainly behind closed walls of local high schools. A more traditional sport is **Canary wrestling** (*la lucha canaria*), described above in Chapter 1. This is practised in all the islands, sometimes on special *terrenos* but more often in the local gym. Big competitions are held as part of the *Fiestas de la Hispanidad* (12 October). **Car rallies** have a big following in Tenerife – no circuits, just the island road system.

Maps

The most widely available maps are published by Firestone. There are two maps covering the region, one for each province (i.e. one for Tenerife plus Gomera, La Palma and Hierro, the other for Gran Canaria plus Lanzarote and Fuerteventura), both with town plans of the provincial capitals. The Hallway/Mair maps (again one per province) do not have town plans but show more detail of the islands. These are available from specialist map shops such as Stanfords in London (12 Long Acre, London W.C.2).

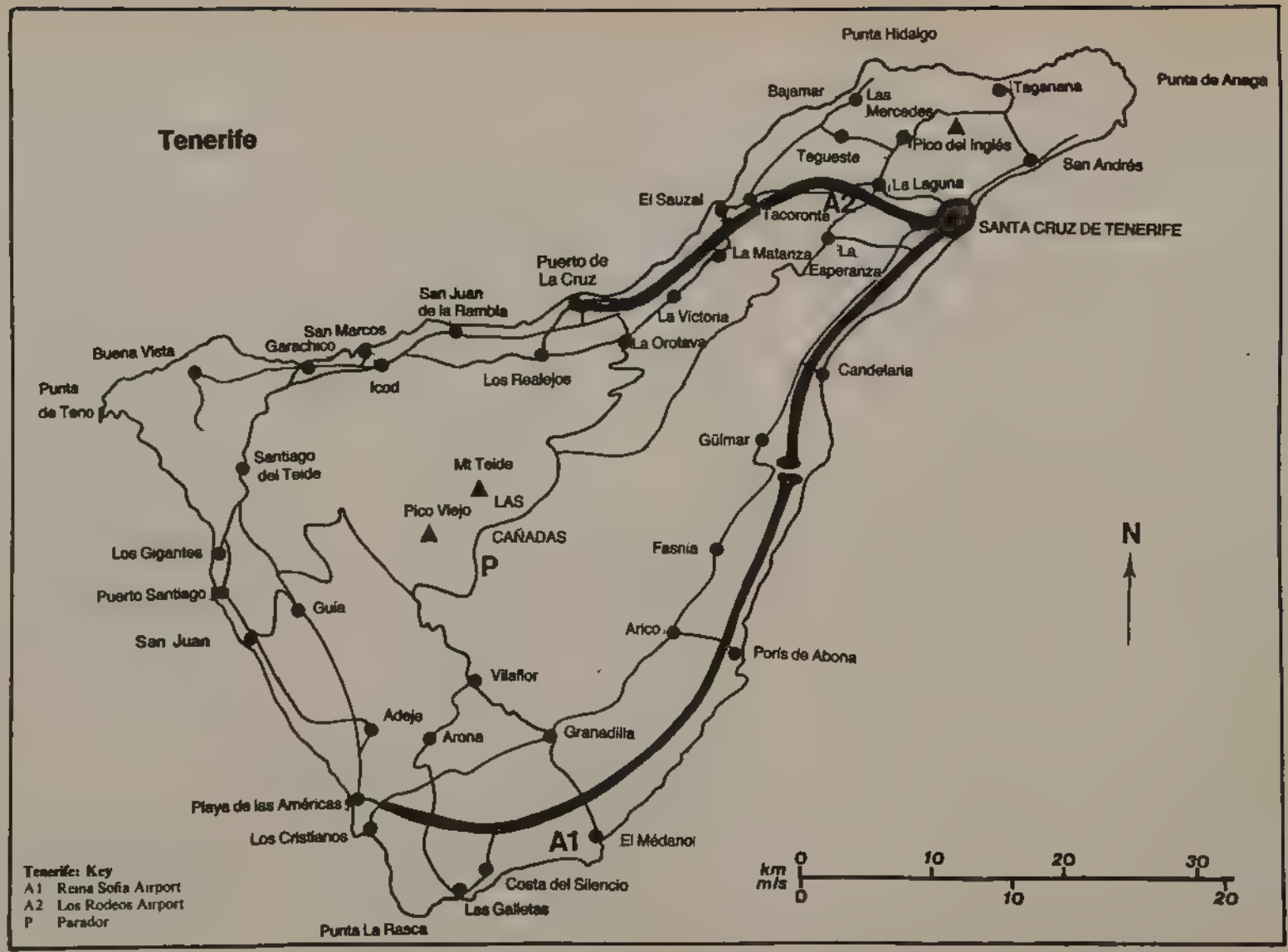
The tourist offices also supply free maps of the islands with town plans of the capitals; they are useful but not exactly detailed. If you're hiring a car and planning to drive around a lot, you definitely need one of the maps mentioned above.

Radio, Television and Newspapers

The Spanish mainland sends programmes beaming across to the Canaries, not noticeable for their quality, but radios and TVs blare everywhere – bars and cafés included. The broadcasts naturally are in Spanish; some TV programmes are imported from the States and Britain but the use of dubbing rather than subtitling makes them hard to follow unless you're fluent in Spanish. However, BBC World Service programmes can be received on transister radios.

Foreign newspapers (*periódicos*) can be bought in most big towns and tourist conglomerations, and an excellent local publications in English,

Island Gazette, is on sale monthly in Tenerife. It contains information about Las Palmas province but presently concentrates on Tenerife. Full of interesting and amusing articles by expatriots, it also has detailed notes on fiestas, restaurants, bus schedules, church services and other items to instruct or entertain the visitor.


Tenerife
Punta Hidalgo
Bajamar
Las Mercedes
Taganana
Punta de Anaga
Pico del Inglés
Tegueste
San Andrés
La Laguna
El Sauzal
A2
Tacoronte
SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE
La Matanza
La Esperanza
Puerto de La Cruz
San Juan de la Rambla
La Victoria
La Orotava
San Marcos
Garachico
Buena Vista
Icod
Los Realejos
Punta de Teno
Candelaria
Güímar
Santiago del Teide
Mt Teide
LAS
Pico Viejo
CAÑADAS
P
Fasnia
Los Gigantes
Puerto Santiago
Guía
San Juan
Arico
Poris de Abona
Vilaflor
Adeje
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Granadilla
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7 Tenerife

Santa Cruz and the North, p80 Puerto de la Cruz and the North Coast, p84 The Mountains: El Teide and Las Cañadas, p87 The South-East Coast: Santa Cruz to Las Galletas, p89 The South-West: Los Cristianos to Santiago del Teide, p90

This is 'the island of eternal spring', according to the tourist brochures, 'a basket of flowers floating in the Atlantic'. Then you land at Reina Sofia Airport and wonder whether you've come to the right place: the landscape looks barren, the vegetation scarce, the sun beats down on dry ravines and hazy distant mountains. For the truth is that this island is full of contrasts and surprises. The north is green and flowery, the south ochre-coloured and arid, the mountains snow-covered in winter.

It is also one of the most popular holiday spots in the world, with Puerto de la Cruz as its top resort, a tourist haven lying in the wide green valley of La Orotava which Alexander von Humboldt so admired. The south-coast resorts of Los Cristianos and Playa de las Américas are showing signs of rivalling Puerto in popularity, but as yet they are still relatively undeveloped. Santa Cruz, the capital, is a fine old city, busy with commerce and shipping rather than tourism – and all the more attractive for that. In between there are the small towns that best show the character of the island: La Laguna, the ex-capital; La Orotava, full of elegant old mansions; Icod, Garachico, Candelaria... And the mountains – everywhere El Teide forms the background to picturesque views just asking to be photographed, rising like Atlas into the sky, looking down on the rest of the Canaries, the rest of the world.

Geography. At 795 square miles, Tenerife is the largest island in the archipelago. It's roughly triangular in shape; from the southernmost

point, Punta de la Rasca, to the north-easterly Punta de Anaga the distance is around 50 miles, from Punta de Anaga to Punta de Teno in the west, a little more. The volcanic origins are clear despite millenia of erosion and man-made interference; various eruptions through the centuries have shaped and re-shaped the landscape, and perfectly formed minor cones erupt from the hillsides or valleys like pimples on an elephant. The mountains rise in a central pyramid, topped by El Teide at more than 12,000 ft, with an easterly ridge reaching across into the north-western peninsula. It's these mountains that cause the surprising climatic differences between north and south of the island; the winds carry moisture up the north face of the mountains which then condenses and falls as rain, while the south is left open to the influence of neighbouring Africa. Even so, the climate is more temperate than one would expect at this latitude, because of the cooling effect of sea breezes and ocean currents. Average temperatures fall between about 63°F in winter and 76°F in summer.

Characteristic physical features of the island are the *barrancos*, dry river beds where only the *cardón* grows – notably the great Barranco del Infierno, Ravine of Hell, in the south-west – and the vast central crater of Las Cañadas (50 square miles) from which rises the peak of El Teide. The island's best beaches tend to cluster round the southern tip of the island, while the rest of the coastline has cliffs, rocky coves and an occasional strip of black volcanic sand or shingle.

History. Alonso de Lugo was the man who finally conquered Tenerife in 1496, ninety-four long years after the Conquest began, and only after several bloody battles. Bencomo, warrior chief of the Guanches, was killed at the Battle of La Laguna (1495), the battle which saw the tide turning at last in the Spaniards' favour. Like many of his fellows, Bencomo's son chose suicide as a preferable alternative to Spanish domination; the surviving Guanches were baptised, enslaved, deported to Andalusia and the Balearic Islands, thoroughly disbanded and demoralized.

De Lugo initiated the process of civilization in Tenerife – hence his honorary title, *Adelantado*. He established the capital at La Laguna and built the church, Iglesia de los Remedios (now the Cathedral); La Laguna remained the island's capital until the 19th century and was later (1796) to become the home of the archipelago's only university. Santa Cruz, the modern capital of the island and of the province, was originally just a small fishing port and only really began to achieve prominence in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The island's history followed the same pattern as that of the others: conquest, colonization and early development, the planting of sugarcane and vines, the establishing of small communities, ports and trade. Progress was faster, though, in Tenerife than in the smaller islands; presumably more prospective colonists were lured here by the promise of richer pickings, more land and more fertile soil. Despite the feudal infighting among early colonists, despite volcanic eruptions, disease, hunger, pirates, plagues of locusts etc, Tenerife was from the first destined to be one of the Canaries' two most important islands.

The wine trade gave Tenerife its economic strength. From the early 16h century vines had been cultivated and wine exported to England and the New World, helped by the fiscal advantages granted to the islands in order to promote trade with the Indies. Soon the ports began to grow, especially Garachico and Puerto de La Orotava (now Puerto de la Cruz) on the north coast. Englishmen came and settled here, especially round Puerto, to supervise this end of the wine trade. Such was their monopoly that attacks by English pirates and privateers were interpreted here as attempts by England to seize the island for her own. No wonder the islanders were so pleased with themselves for defeating Nelson in 1797. But the British are still here in considerable numbers, their influence stronger in Tenerife than in any other island.

In the 19th century, the Canaries were declared to be a united province of Spain, and in 1823 Santa Cruz formally became the capital of the province, much to the disgust of Las Palmas, until the 1912 Law of the *Cabildos* (seats of local government) turned the archipelago into *two* provinces with two capitals, Santa Cruz and Las Palmas. Santa Cruz province comprises Tenerife itself plus the three islands of Gomera, La Palma and Hierro.

Today. Tourism had already come to Tenerife in the 19th century in the form of wealthy British and North Europeans sailing south with trunks full of evening clothes to spend the winter here. A hundred years later, everyone can afford to come; the island is only four hours' in a jet plane from Northern Europe. The city of Santa Cruz and many of the old towns like La Laguna and La Orotava have retained their dignity, their heritage, in the face of the modern onslaught, while within the past ten to fifteen years whole new communities have sprouted to serve the needs and desires of holidaymakers. Above all it is Puerto de la Cruz that most tourists come to, the town that the English have favoured since the early days of the wine trade. More recently, tourist *urbanizaciones* have started to spread around the southern tip of Tenerife, though not on the

same scale as in Gran Canaria, helped by the arrival of the new airport which is only ten minutes away by road.

Tenerife has now become a major tourist resort, its ideal climate and natural beauty attracting one million visitors every year. The excellent facilities catering for foreigners, matched only by Gran Canaria, include the restaurants and nightclubs listed below (for accommodation see the chapter on Where to Stay).

Restaurants in Tenerife. NB: This is merely a selection; the tourist offices can supply addresses of many more, especially in Santa Cruz and Puerto. (Carretera General = main road.)

Santa Cruz

La Riviera, Rambla General Franco 151. First-class, best in Tenerife.
La Estancia, Méndez Nuñez 110. Creole food.
China, Avenida de Anaga. An excellent Chinese restaurant.
Dragón de Oro, Avenida de Anaga. Also Chinese.
Mimosas, Enrique Wolfson 36.
Balcón de Anaga, Bailadero. Regional cuisine.
La Tasca Canaria, San Juan Bautista 39. Regional.
La Masia II, San Fernando 7. Catalan specialities.
La Dorada, Rambla General Franco 131. An Italian pizzeria.
Pub La Oca, General Antequera 17. A very good cafeteria.

Puerto de la Cruz

Anatolia, Polígono San Felipe.
Bellavista, Urbanización La Paz.
Bistro, Avenida Generalíssimo (closed Monday).
Casino Taoro, Parque Taoro.
Balcón Canario, Perdomo 1. Regional specialities.
Castillo de San Felipe (to the west of town, in the old fortress).
China, Avenida Venezuela 3-A.
La Finca, Romantica. Shellfish specialities (closed Sundays).
Gallego, Camino Cordobes 2. Specializes in *gallego* food, i.e. from Galicia in north-west Spain.
Rafaello, Avenida Venezuela 44. Italian.
Taj Mahal, Avenida Generalíssimo.
Tosca, José Antonio 1. Self-service.
Café de Paris, corner of Avenida Colón & Avenida Venezuela. Classy cafeteria.

Tacoronte

Fiesta Canaria, Barriada Santa Catalina. First-class regional cuisine.
Los Porrones, Carretera General. Excellent food, Catalan specialities.
La Taurina, Carretera General. *Gallego* specialities.
Club Parque Mesa del Mar.

Los Realejos

Tierra de Oro, La Montaneta.
Cueva Grill, Romantica II.
Miramar, Urbanización Valparaiso (above Romantica II). Hungarian food.

Bajamar

El Conde, Urbanización El Riego.
El Gallego, Carretera General.
El Hueco, Carretera General. French food (closed Thursday).

La Esperanza

Bodegón Campestre, Perra 1. Very popular, with very good regional food.

In the mountains

El Portillo, at crossroads in Las Cañadas. Regional food and coach parties.

In the South

El Barco, Acantilado de Los Gigantes, Santiago del Teide.
Taberna del Mar, Las Galletas.
El Chaparral, Las Galletas.
El Corral del Guanche, Tinoco.
Copacabana, Playa de las Américas.
Santa Veronica, Playa de las Américas.
Club Bonanza, Playa de las Américas.
Pinoccio, Playa de las Américas. Italian.
Lucullus, Los Cristianos. A popular café.

Nightlife in Tenerife. Puerto and Santa Cruz are the main centres of Tenerife's nightlife, with a terrific choice, and the south coast resorts

have a similar range of discothèques and nightclubs (*salas de fiesta*). This list is just a brief selection; most hotels also have their own clubs and discos.

Santa Cruz

La Caracola, Camino Tabares 30.
Cintra Club, San José 20.
King's Club, General Franco 76.
Club Pancho, Carretera General, Vistabella.
Copacabana, Avenida Angel Romero 2.
Norte 33, Bethencourt Alfonso 1.

Puerto de la Cruz

Lago Martiánez, in the new leisure complex off Avenida Colón.
Los Caprichos, Avenida Colón (in Hotel Valle Mar).
Can-Can Discoteca, Edificio Masaru, Urbanización La Paz.
Santa Maria Discoteca, Café Columbus (1st floor), Playa Martiánez.
Disco Club Numero Uno, Obispo Pérez Cáceres.
Hollywood, Avenida Generalíssimo.
Botańico, Urbanización Botánico.
Tropicana, Avenida Generalíssimo.
Why Not, Avenida Generalíssimo.
Caballo Blanco, San Telmo 18.
El Tope, Calle Martiánez.
Tabu, Zamora 15.

Santa Ursula

Cueva Los Corales, Cuesta La Villa.
Banana Club, Cuesta La Villa (km 32).
El Pajar, Carretera General, Cuesta la Villa.

La Laguna/Bajamar

La Gruta Azul, Avenida Bajamar.
Acapulco Club, Bajamar.
Yumb, Avenida Trinidad.
Tivoli, Bajamar.
Boa, Heraclio Sánchez 6.
Julian's, Santo Domingo 2.

In the South

Acuarium Club, Los Cristianos.
El Bravo, Las Galletas.

Club House, Los Cristianos.
Acapulco, Playa de las Américas.
Tabu, Los Cristianos.
Amerika, Playa de las Américas.
Club Dolar, Playa de las Américas
La Barca, Playa de las Américas.
Kabuga, Playa de las Américas.
Belroy Moreque, Los Cristianos.
Cristina, Los Cristianos.
Club Paris, Santiago del Teide.

Festivals in Tenerife

5 January: *Cabalgata de los Reyes Magos*, Procession of the Magi (Santa Cruz).
6 January: Festival of the Three Kings (Garachico).
22 January: *Fiesta de San Sebastián* (Garachico and Los Realejos). *Fiesta de San Antonio Abad* (Icod).
2 February: *Fiesta de San Blas* (Candelaria).
February: *Fiestas del Invierno* or *Carnaval*, one of the island's biggest festivals (Santa Cruz and Puerto).
2 March: *Fiesta del Patriarca San José* (La Guancha and El Tanque).
March/April: Holy Week, celebrated all over the island; floral carpets at La Orotava and La Laguna.
May: Spring Festival, with processions, bullfights, sports etc, including *Fiesta de la Cruz* to celebrate foundation of city on 3 May (Santa Cruz).
May/June: Corpus Christi, celebrated everywhere; most impressive at La Orotava, La Laguna and Tacoronte.
24 June: *Fiesta de San Juán* (Icod).
July (1st Sunday): *Fiesta de San Benito Abad* (La Laguna).
July: *Fiesta de Gran Poder de Dios* and *Fiesta de la Virgen del Carmen;* processions, fireworks, sailing regattas (Santa Cruz and Puerto).
25 July: Festival to celebrate victory over Nelson (Santa Cruz).
27 July: *Fiesta de San Cristóbal* (La Laguna).
15 August: Feast of Our Lady of Candelaria, honouring the image of the Virgin that the Guanches worshipped before the Spaniards' arrival (Candelaria).
August (3rd Sunday): *Fiesta de Cristo del Gran Poder* (Bajamar).
14-15 September: *Fiesta del Santísimo Cristo* (La Laguna).

21 September: *Fiesta del Santísimo Cristo* (Tacoronte).
3 October: *Fiesta de Nuestra Señora del Rosario* (Fasnia).
5 October: *Fiesta del Cristo de la Misericordia* (Garachico).
7 October: *Fiesta de Nuestra Señora del Rosario* (El Rosario).
12 October: *Fiesta de Nuestra Señora del Pilar* (Granadilla).
21 October: *Fiesta de Santa Ursula* (Santa Ursula).
24-25 October: *Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios;* concerts, dancing, *lucha canaria* contests (Buenavista del Norte).
16 November: *Fiestas del Volcán* – in honour of the volcano! (Guia de Isora).
25 November: *Fiesta de Santa Catalina* (Taganana).
22 December: *Fiestas de Navidad*; various cultural and traditional events (Santa Cruz).

Santa Cruz and the North

Capital of the island since the 19th century, Santa Cruz is a handsome city with a population of around 200,000. It is a major port and commercial centre, full of shipping agencies, modern offices and prosperous businessmen, but with a relaxed atmosphere amid the Spanish colonial architecture and many tree-lined boulevards, parks and gardens. It began as a small settlement around the mouth of the Barranco de Santos and grew quickly into an important port where the early transatlantic sailors made their rendezvous. Maritime raids by Moors, pirates and Englishmen – including Drake (1656), Jennings (1706) and Nelson (1797) – caused the building of several fortifications, notably the 17th century Castillo de San Juán and the Castillo de Paso Alto, with the very cannon that shot off Nelson's arm. More recently (1936), Franco and his army colleagues here planned here the national uprising that led to the Spanish Civil War.

The heart of the modern city is its **port**, the docks protected by a long quay where the cruise liners and cargo ships tie up. At the southern end is the **Plaza de España**, built on the site of a 15th-century castle, with the tall **Monumento a los Caídos** in the centre commemorating the Fallen in the Civil War; inside the monument, illuminated at night, a lift takes you up to the top for a marvellous view all over the city. Facing the Plaza is the **Palacio** or **Cabildo Insular**, seat of local government, housing the **Tourist Office** in one corner and the **Archaeological Museum** (entrance in Bravo Murillo). The Museum has a fascinating collection of Guanche relics, from wooden spoons and primitive pottery to mummified corpses;

teeth, hair and nails intact. (Open Monday-Saturday, 9 am – 1 pm and 4 – 6 pm; admission 25 pesetas.)

From the Plaza de España, the wide tree-lined **Avenida de Anaga** stretches north overlooking the docks. At its southern end is a pleasant promenade with open-air cafés and kiosks; it's a favourite meeting spot amid trees and hibiscus bushes, full of noise and colour: the bustle of traffic, docks and pedestrians, wandering vendors of lottery tickets and embroidered linen, tourists spilling out of the cruise ships berthed nearby or arriving on the hydrofoil from Las Palmas. At the northern end, the Avenida meets the **Rambla del General Franco** and turns into the **Carretera de San Andrés**, main road to San Andrés, a sizeable fishing port. On the way you pass the docks and the **Real Club Náutica**, the yacht club, then the **Castillo del Paso Alto**. This 17th century fortification has now been turned into an attractive garden and museum preserving the cannon – El Tigre ('the Tiger') as it's called – that wounded Nelson's arm in the battle of 1797. On past the **Balneario** (public swimming pool) the road leads through San Andrés to the famous artificial beach of **Las Teresitas**, long, white and clean, with a few shady palm trees and ice cream stalls. The sand was imported from the Sahara in the late 1960s, thousands of tons of it, and protected from ocean currents by a long low breakwater, inside which the calm water mirrors the blue sky and invites even timid bathers to swim.

Back in town there are several attractive parks and squares, the biggest being the **Parque Municipal** (or Parque García Sanabria, in memory of a past city mayor), full of tall trees, trickling fountains, statuary, pergolas dripping with bougainvillea, water gardens, aviaries containing exotic birds. It's a wonderful place to meander or to sit on a stone bench in the shade and watch children at play, a peaceful retreat from the busy city outside. From here, a short walk along **Avenida 25 de Julio** leads to a most unusual little square, **Plaza 25 de Julio**, in the centre of which is a circular fountain of blue, yellow, green and white tiles in the Art Deco style. All round the square are stone seats covered in similar glazed tiles, the seat backs bearing tiled advertisements dating from the 1920s (restored, not original) for Anchor Butter from 'Nueva Zelandia', Martini & Rossi, early Fiats, cigarettes and matches. Nearby is **St. George's**, the Anglican Church. Further down the avenue is the **Plaza de Weyler**, a cheerful noisy little square full of flowers and open-air bars, overlooked by the Capitania General, military headquarters of the island where Franco planned his uprising.

A quieter corner is the **Plaza del Príncipe**, rather unkempt, above the **Museu Municipal** (Municipal Museum) in Calle José Murphy. This museum houses a collection of paintings, mostly Spanish but with some

anonymous works of the Flemish school, and a few sculptures. (Open Monday-Friday, afternoons only.) Just behind the museum is the **Church of San Francisco**, dating from the 17th-18th century, with a baroque portico adorning the simple Spanish colonial-style façade. Inside the church is a wooden-beamed ceiling, a traditional feature of Canary Island church architecture.

Back at the Plaza de España, another small square is the **Plaza de la Candelaria** with an 18th-century marble monument in the centre honouring the Virgin of Candelaria; around the base stand figures representing Guanche kings worshipping the islands' patroness. Facing the square is the **Palacio de Carta**, a 17th-century mansion with typical balconies and an open-air central patio, now declared to be a *monumento nacional*; if you just can't seem to see it, look again – it's the Banco Español de Crédito, who restored it and now use it as a most remarkable bank.

Heading south from the Plaza de la Candelaria along Calle Candelaria you are entering the old part of town, on the edge of the **Barranco de Santos** where the first settlement grew up. Right beside the Barranco is Santa Cruz's mother church, **Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción**, originally early 16th-century and reconstructed after a fire in 1652, at the height of baroque fashion, with the tower added later (18th century). The plain exterior belies the grandeur inside, notably the baroque high altar made of jasper and an abundance of gilt and silverwork. The image of Our Lady of the Conception over the high altar was brought to the island by Alonso de Lugo, along with the *Santa Cruz* or 'Holy Cross' before which he celebrated his first mass in the island. Almost equally revered are the two flags captured from Nelson in that fated battle that the city celebrates every 25 July; they are in glass display cases in the Capilla de Santiago (Chapel of St James) off the north aisle.

Across the Barranco is the **Mercado de Nuestra Señora de Africa**, or 'African Market', open Monday to Saturday. This is the island's main market, a noisy colourful conglomeration of stalls selling every sort of local produce – vegetables, fruit, fish, meat, flowers, etc.

Around the North-East. From Santa Cruz several routes lead to **La Laguna**, ex-capital and second largest town in Tenerife. An air of dignity, of calm Spanish colonial atmosphere pervades the town, deriving from the numerous old churches and museums. Founded by Alonso de Lugo in 1497, the town was named for a nearby lake, long since dried out. Among the many monuments here is the **Cathedral** (consecrated 1913), built on the site of the earlier church, Iglesia de los

Remedios, founded by de Lugo; its neoclassical façade fronts a pseudo-gothic, pseudo-baroque interior. Nearby in Calle San Agustín is the **Bishop's Palace** with a splendid 17th-century façade and a pretty interior courtyard. Another important church is **La Concepción**, founded by de Lugo in the late 15th century but suffering frequent reconstructions right up to the present. The attractive belltower was a late 17th-century addition. In Calle Santo Domingo beside a ravine stands the **Church of Santo Domingo**, part of an old Dominican monastery dating from the 16th century; in the monastery garden is one of the best specimens of that extraordinary tree, *el drago*. The town was and still is the archipelago's cultural centre; with the modern university it looks like maintaining that position.

North from La Laguna, a short drive takes you into the forests and peaks of the Anaga peninsula, through the village of **Las Mercedes** and into a region of lush native vegetation and glorious views, with many a *mirador* (viewpoint) where you can stop to admire the scenery, including **Pico del Inglés** (3,250 ft), or Englishman's Peak. Following the road north you come to the village of **Taganana**, one-time centre of the island's first sugarcane plantations, whose church contains an early 16th-century Flemish triptych.

Near La Laguna on the north-east corner of the Anaga peninsula is **Bajamar**, a fishing village that has become very popular with tourists; modern developments are springing up to cope with the increasing influx of visitors. A series of large natural swimming pools down at the sea's edge compensate for the lack of good beaches. Twisting northwards out of Bajamar the road leads to **Punta Hidalgo**, a flat tongue of land poking out into the sea; here too the developers are at work.

Due west of La Laguna, along the motorway past Los Rodeos Airport and the Golf Club, is the small town of **Tacoronte**, notable for its two churches: Iglesia de Santa Catalina, dating from the 16th century and Iglesia del Cristo de los Dolores, part of a 17th-century convent. The latter houses a remarkable image of Christ with his arms *around* the Cross.

The hills and cliffs near Tacoronte were once a major Guanche community, according to the artefacts and remains found here. The nearby village of **El Sauzal** has a very attractive domed church (16th century, with later additions).

Puerto de la Cruz and the North Coast

Once the port of La Orotava (see below), Puerto de la Cruz is now the island's largest resort. It has been especially popular with the British ever since the early days of the wine trade, when English merchants settled in the area, and British and other foreign enterprises have turned the town into a cosmopolitan centre of international renown.

The Valley of La Orotava slopes gently down to the coast through a sea of green banana plantations towards the hundreds of modern hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, bars, cafés, souvenir shops and every possible tourist attraction – with one exception. There are no sandy beaches. Two or three small black pebbly stretches are all that Puerto can offer in this respect. No one seems to notice the lack, however, especially since the recent construction of the **Lago Martiánez** swimming pools, just part of a huge complex of leisure facilities built on 35,000 square yards of land reclaimed from the sea. The attractive original layout includes cafés, clubs and bars surrounding the pools where sunbathers stretch out among an amazing collection of modern sculpture, plants and fountains.

By way of total contrast, the old part of town – west along Avenida de Colón – starts at Calle San Telmo, where the tiny 17th-century fishermen's **Chapel of San Telmo** stands by the water's edge. Behind the chapel a new pedestrian precinct leads back towards the Lago Martiánez, past arcades of shops and bars, sidestalls and pavement artists. Near the chapel is the town's mother church, **Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Peña de Francia**, dating from the early 17th century; it has a thoroughly Spanish colonial air about it, helped by the palm trees and tropical plants in the **Plaza de la Iglesia**, and a tall campanile which used to be an important local landmark until multistorey hotel blocks got in the way. Across the Plaza from the church is an attractive modern building housing the **Tourist Office**. From behind the church, Calle de Santo Domingo leads to the **Ayuntamiento** (Town Hall) and the **Mercado** (Market), the central building where local produce is sold, surrounded by scores of colourful souvenir stalls.

From the little harbour nearby – the **fishing port**, where gaily painted wooden boats are drawn up on the shingle – Calle Mesquinez heads west out of town past the **Castillo de San Felipe** towards Icod de los Viños. The little castle (17th century) beside the shingle beach, Playa de San Felipe, was once the port's major defence against pirates and now houses a restaurant. One of the town's two ravines, **Barranco de San Felipe**, marks the western edge of town. Beyond the boundary is the much advertised **Loro Parque**, an amusement park offering various

attractions from parrot shows to orchids. Children get in for free, adults have to pay.

One favourite meeting spot in Puerto is the noisy cheerful square called **Plaza General Franco.** Here you can sit beneath the trees and relax after a busy morning's souvenir-hunting with a glass of *vino* or a coffee. The surrounding streets are full of shops selling duty-free goods and *artesania*, local crafts. A final 'sight' to see in the town itself is the **Casa Iriarte,** one of the few surviving old houses in Puerto displaying the typical Canary Island wooden balconies and central patio; it's on the corner of Calle Iriarte and Calle José Antonio.

Above town rises the steep volcanic cone of the **Parque Taoro,** crowned by the **Casino** and a dozen hotels set in pretty gardens. The Casino used to be the luxurious Gran Hotel Taoro where rich foreigners came to spend winter, supposedly the first tourist hotel in the Canaries (built 19th century). It's a steep and twisty climb up to the top, but worth it for the view. To the east is the **Barranco de Martiánez,** curving down to the Playa Martiánez, (another black volcanic shingle beach). Overlooking the beach are the sheer **cliffs of Martiánez;** the now eroded caves in the cliff's face are thought to have been inhabited by Guanches. Rough steps lead up past the caves and floodlights that illuminate them by night to the Urbanización La Paz, a modern complex of hotels and villas with more shops, bars, restaurants etc. Some of the hotels up here have really splendid views, and they tend to be much better designed than the older hotel blocks in town. The little 18th-century church of La Paz, near the top of the cliff steps, is a reconstruction of a late 16th-century chapel.

The Carretera del Botánico climbs up through La Paz to Puerto's famous **Jardín Botánico,** or Botanical Garden, founded in 1788 (open daily 9 am – 6 pm or later; admission 30 pesetas). The garden was intended as a staging post for tropical plants arriving from the New World, a place where they could become acclimatized before being transferred to less hospitable climates further north; now the variety and vigour of some hundreds of exotic specimens is a particular treat for botanists. Even non-specialists can enjoy the peace and beauty here, marvel at the giant ficus from South America or sniff the sweet scent of jasmine.

Immediately above Puerto is the old town of **La Orotava,** heart of the valley of the same name. It's one great museum of Tenerife's past, full of 17th and 18th-century mansions with the typical carved wooden balconies, and noted for its gardens, local fiestas and good shopping. Once part of the Guanche kingdom of Araotava, the richest and greatest kingdom on the islands, after the Conquest it became home for all the

most aristocratic colonists. The fertile soil was cultivated for sugarcane (now bananas) and vines, and the wealthy merchants established their homes here. It's a town to explore on foot, ambling up steep narrow one-way streets past those beautiful old houses. The principal church is the **Iglesia de la Concepción** beside Plaza Casañas; founded in 1503, it has been repeatedly modified and most of the present building dates from 1768. In the **Plaza General Franco**, in front of the Town Hall, the ground is turned into a major work of art during Corpus Christi celebrations – not a floral carpet here, but enormously detailed and beautiful religious scenes created out of differently coloured sands. Behind the Town Hall is La Orotava's Botanical Garden, like the one in Puerto, full of exotic trees and flowers. Quite the most remarkable feature of this town, however, is the number of old houses displaying the best examples of typical Canary Island architecture, especially the attractive wooden balconies and heavy doors that are often surmounted by a noble coat-of-arms. One house open to the public is the **Casa de los Balcones** in Calle San Francisco; built in 1632 it has been turned into a showroom for local crafts, but all the original features are there and it retains an atmosphere of cool elegance and past grandeur.

From La Orotava the road north-east to Santa Ursula passes a *mirador* on the spot where Alexander von Humboldt supposedly stood to admire the valley; what he'd think of it now, with Puerto's high rise hotels and the motorway, is anybody's guess. **Santa Ursula** has little to cause a visitor to stop, except perhaps a leather-goods factory and a few art-craft shops teasing pesetas out of the tourist, and neither do the nearby villages of **La Victoria** and **La Matanza de Acentejo**, despite their great historical significance from the two battles fought here between Guanches and Spaniards.

West of Puerto and La Orotava stands the small town of **Los Realejos**, two towns really – **Alto** and **Bajo** (upper and lower). This was where the Spaniards had their final skirmish with the Guanches and the name commemorates the royal troops who were victorious (*real* being Spanish for royal). De Lugo's family lived here in the house called Hacienda de los Príncipes, in Realejo Bajo. The **Church of Santiago** (St James) in Realejo Alto is the oldest church on the island, founded by de Lugo himself in 1498, but repeatedly modified since then; most of the modern present building dates from the 17th century except for the tower (18th century).

Continuing west through the small town of San Juan de la Rambla on the coast, or La Guancha higher inland – the latter has a very attractive example of wooden balconies (El Casino) – we come to **Icod de los Viños** ('of the vines'). It's a charming little town, most famous for the

Drago Milenario or Thousand-Year-Old Dragon Tree claimed to be the world's finest and oldest specimen. Honoured by the Guanches as a sacred emblem, El Drago's blood-red sap was used in various medicinal preparations, supposedly with curative properties. The area around Icod is rich agricultural land, heavily cultivated, with a profusion of flowers. The town's Church of San Marcos dates from the early 16th century with many later alterations. Below Icod on the coast is the small port of **San Marcos**, increasingly favoured by tourists for its black sandy beach and good swimming.

Some 3 miles from Icod is **Garachico**. This was a major port in the island's early colonial days, then known as 'Vila Rica' (rich town), until a 1706 volcanic eruption destroyed half the town; an islet called El Roque off Garachico bears a cross to commemorate the disaster. Garachico today is built over the tongue of lava that solidified on reaching the sea, but several original buildings survived the eruption, notably the ancient but recently restored **Castillo de San Miguel**, a late 16th-century fort, and the 17th-century **Palacio de los Condes de Gomera**, one-time residence of the Counts of Gomera, with an interesting baroque doorway. The natural pools beside the Castillo offer good seawater swimming and there's another black sandy beach.

Los Silos, west of Garachico on the road to Buenavista, is in a rich agricultural area, growing bananas and coffee beneath the forested hills. **Buenavista** itself is the north-westernmost village in Tenerife; beyond it the steep hills and cliffs mark the Teno peninsula, hard of access to all but the very determined, though a track leads down to the lighthouse and windswept promontory.

The Mountains: El Teide and Las Cañadas

Starting from La Laguna, the C.824 heads rapidly up into the hills above Los Rodeos Airport. Almost at once you're into the **Forest of Esperanza**, a forest of Canary pines, full of scent of the resin, where many of the trees lean southwards because of the prevailing northerly winds. At Las Raices is a monument commemorating a meeting that Franco held here to plan the 1936 anti-republican uprising.

The road climbs steadily up the dorsal ridge, twisting and turning round the mountainsides, with marvellous views to north and south – if the clouds don't wrap a wet blanket round the hills. The air grows gradually fresher and cooler as the altitude increases; in winter there is often snow lying here, sometimes blocking the road. At **El Portillo** ('narrow pass'), a road off to the right winds down to La Orotava and

Puerto some 18 miles away, descending through the Valley of La Orotava and offering some of the best views in the island. El Portillo marks the edge of the vast extraordinary crater of **Las Cañadas**, surrounded by jagged peaks and dominated by the aloof summit of Teide. The area has been designated a National Park, but this is no park in the usual sense; it's a wilderness of rocks and petrified lava, occasionally lighted upon with glee by film directors who want a bare primeval setting for their stars. Strong sunshine dazzles the eye, glinting off shiny obsidian in the lava beds, and the different compositions of the rock are easily traced by their colours: black, red and ochre; green patches mark the forestry plantations and, with the bright turquoise of the sky, there is a sense that this is indeed a technicolour celluloid world.

The lush natural vegetation of lower zones here dies away leaving only the scented *retama*, like broom, the strange tall spikes of *tajinaste* (their purple flower stalks sometimes reach to over 10 ft, best seen in early spring), and the occasional fortunate glimpse of the Teide violet, one of the rarest and hardiest native specimens. One or two picnic areas have been laid out on the level floor of the crater, amid the thin pines and bizarre rock formations, and Tenerife's small *parador* (government-run inn) crouches below the crater walls, near a clinic where asthma sufferers apparently find relief. But most of all it is **El Teide** that people come to see. The dormant volcano – it last erupted in 1909 – is the Number One sight in the archipelago, a natural wonder to make mere mortals gasp. It rises to 12,198 ft, the highest mountain in all Spain, its shoulders sprinkled with snow for much of the year. Hearty mountaineers can make the ascent on foot, though arrangements should be made in advance (through the Tourist Office) for a guide and for overnight accommodation at the tiny Refugio de Altavista. The majority of people, however, prefer to use the *teleférico* or cablecar; the base station stands at the roadside, and a ten-minute journey takes thirty passengers at a time up to a height of 11,500 ft. This is over 3,000 ft above the crater floor, but you still have to climb the final few hundred feet to reach the summit; sightseers with heart and blood pressure problems are advised not to go. The cablecar operates only in calm weather; strong winds can make the cabin swing. A return trip presently costs about £2/US$3.50.

At the summit the views are stupendous, all over Tenerife and out across the ocean to the hazy shapes of Gran Canaria, Gomera, La Palma and Hierro. Looking down at Las Cañadas, you can believe the geologists' theory that the crater is an ancient collapsed cone, the remains of a peak that was perhaps far taller than Teide. To the southeast is Pico Viejo (10,000 ft), whose last major eruption was in

1798. All around are lesser peaks surrounding the crater, a ragged outline against the sky.

From **Boca del Tauce** on the west rim of the crater, two roads lead down to the coast, one via Tamaimo to Los Gigantes on the west coast or Icod in the north, the other via Vilaflor to Granadilla and El Médano.

The South-East Coast: Santa Cruz to Las Galletas

The Autopista del Sur, a fast modern motorway, sweeps south from Santa Cruz to the Reina Sofía Airport and Los Cristianos, parallel to the coast. The old road (C.822) meanders along in the same direction but further up the hill slopes. It is the old road that visits some of Tenerife's most typical small towns and villages.

On the coast below the motorway, just south of a small resort called **Las Caletillas**, is the village of **Candelaria**, dominated by the tall white tower of its Basilica. Inside the **Basilica**, of post-war construction, is the highly revered patroness of Tenerife and all the Canaries, Our Lady of Candelaria. Object of a major *romería* (pilgrimage) every August, the sumptuously clothed image of the Virgin and Child dates from 1827 and replaces the original statue that was lost the previous year in a landslide. The story of the original image is a curious one. When the Spaniards arrived to conquer and convert the Guanches, they found the island's primitive inhabitants worshipping a statue of the Virgin which they had found miraculously washed up on the nearby beach of Chimisay and had then installed in a cave. The monks in the old Dominican monastery of Candelaria became the image's guardians, and the monastery contains paitings of the original statue. In the plaza in front of the Basilica stand nine statues representing the nine Guanche kings of Tenerife.

The largest town in this area is **Güímar,** situated on a gently sloping hillside. Once the capital of a Guanche kingdom, Güimar is now an agricultural centre where potatoes and tomatoes are grown, but not nearly so lush as the Valley of La Orotava just the other side of the mountains. On the coast 3 miles below is Güímar's own port and small holiday resort, **Puerto de Güímar.** South of Güimar along the inland high road, past the Mirador de Don Martin offering fine views back over the Güímar valley, through the picturesque hamlet of **Fasnia** in a land of semi-sterility, you reach the Siamese-twin villages of **Arico el Viejo** and **Arico el Nuevo** (Old and New Arico). The church of San Juan Bautista in Arico dating from the early 17th century has an attractive belltower (18th century), displaying a certain Portuguese influence. On the coast below Arico is another small resort, **Porís,** beside the prominent

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8 Gomera

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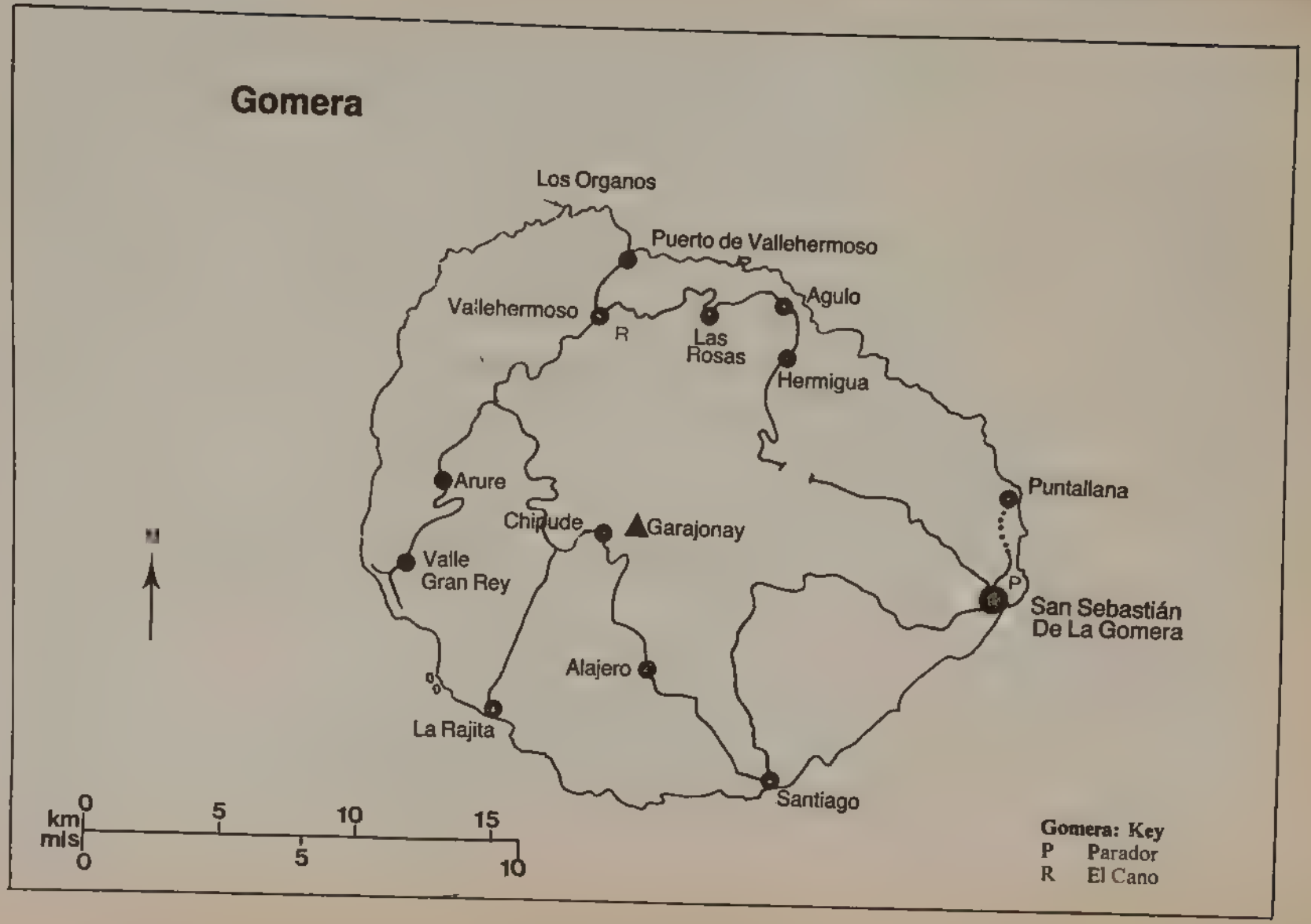
Due west of Tenerife, 17 miles away, lies the island of Gomera, a place of peace and serenity, utterly contrasting with her larger neighbour in that tourist development here is nonexistent. Until Gomera acquires an airport, the situation is likely to remain the same – unspoilt and beautiful.

The island (146 square miles) is shaped a bit like a fruitcake, with mountainous interior and steep cliffs all round the coastline – no beaches worthy of mention. The highest point is Alto de Garajonay (4,850 ft), surrounded by tall peaks and deep valleys that make communications very difficult. Even today there are few good roads; those that do exist are characterized by hairpin bends, steep gradients and sheer drops down the mountainside. Until the middle of this century the easiest way to get from one place to another was to take a boat around the coast then trudge uphill to your destination. Partly to overcome this problem the islanders developed a whistling language which they used to 'speak' to each other across the valleys; a piercing whistle could carry much further than the ordinary human voice and the whistling evolved into a complex series of sounds that has been officially recognized as a form of language. With the invention of radio and telephones, the whistling skills have largely been lost – but more of this below.

History. According to archaeologists, the first inhabitants of Gomera were even more primitive than the Guanches in other islands, submitting to no laws and having no recognizable social system. Jean de Bethencourt arrived in 1404 and supposedly conquered the island, but sporadic fighting between Guanches and early colonists persisted long into the century. This became of one of the seignorial islands (*islas de señorio*),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ruled over by the hereditary Condes (Counts) de Gomera until such rights were abolished in the 19th century and all the islands became the property of the Spanish Crown. The first Conde de Gomera was Fernán Peraza, who made his base at San Sebastián and built a fortress of which the keep or tower still stands (Torre del Conde). His daughter married one Diego de Herrera and the Peraza-Herrera family together ruled the four islands of Gomera, Hierro, Lanzarote and Fuerteventura. Fernán's grandson, Fernán Peraza 'El Joven' (Junior), was such a tyrant that the native Gomerans rose against him, obliging him and his wife Beatriz de Bobadilla to seek refuge in his grandfather's keep; later they caught him out on an assignation with a beautiful Guanche maiden and killed him. In punishment for Peraza's death the Guanches were rounded up and massacred, mutilated, drowned or enslaved and deported.

Shortly after all this, in 1492 Christopher Columbus turned up in San Sebastián, which was already a flourishing little port. He was on his way to find the Indies and had been forced to hang around in the Canaries while one of his ships underwent repairs in Las Palmas; it is said that he was drawn to Gomera by the charms of the resident femme fatale, Beatriz de Bobadilla, now a widow and future wife of the *Adelantado* himself, Alonso de Lugo. Certainly it's likely that they already knew each other as both had frequented the Spanish Court, but one imagines that his mind was on other things.

By the mid 16th century sugarcane was Gomera's chief source of wealth, followed by vines, cereals and timber. San Sebastián was visited by many of the Spanish ships sailing across the Atlantic to and from the New World; pirates came too and sacked the port several times in the late 16th and 17th centuries – an indication that this was a target worth attacking. But the island was ever in the shadow of Tenerife; fewer colonists came to settle this little island and more of them later migrated to the New World colonies to seek their fortunes in Cuba or South America. The difficulty of cultivating Gomera's steep valleys led to hunger and chronic emigration, and throughout the centuries Gomera lagged further and further behind the larger, more developed Canary Islands.

Today. The island's population today numbers around 24,000, of whom some 6,500 live in the capital, San Sebastián. Of all of the Canaries, Gomera has the least serious water problem; several springs and streams help the cultivation of bananas, tomatoes and *papas* (potatoes) in the flatter areas and on terraces that rise in a multitude of steps up the mountainsides. Fishing also contributes to the economy, with fish fac-

tories canning tuna etc at Santiago and La Rajita, the only sign of 20th-century industrialism in the island.

As for tourism, that's all in the future. At present, the only people who visit Gomera have to come by ferry, though there are vague plans for an airport here one day. Most visitors make the 1½ hour journey from Los Cristianos in southern Tenerife, usually just on a one-day tour as there is a shortage of hotel accommodation here and a total lack of the usual diversions that tourists demand. But those who do come are enchanted by the beautiful scenery, the lack of commercialism and the friendliness of the people – who have earned Gomera the epithet *Isla de Cordialidad.*

The islanders' most extraordinary claim to fame is their whistling language, *el silbo.* Now practised by only a few of the Gomerans it hasn't quite died out and you may be lucky enough to catch a demonstration. The *silbadores* (whistlers) use various combinations of fingers in the mouth to produce a startling diversity of fortissimo notes that are clearly differentiated from each other. One theory (see History section in Chapter 1) is that the whistling was used by Gomera's first-ever inhabitants, Guanches who had had their tongues cut out and who therefore needed fingers to help articulate the different sounds. Certainly it must have proved invaluable to generations of shepherds and farmers who wanted to communicate across the valleys, and only recently people have been heard to pass such whistled message as 'Ask Julio if he'll buy me a pack of Coronas when he goes into San Sebastián' or 'Tell Maria that I'll be late home tonight'. Special demonstrations are occasionally laid on for the tourists, at which the visitor can suggest errands or messages to be communicated and then observe that his exact instructions are followed – to the letter, as it were. There's no trickery involved; this is an authentic skill and worth preserving, even if only for the amusement of outsiders.

Festivals in Gomera. The main fiestas in Gomera are those honouring the island's patroness, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and its most famous visitor, Christopher Columbus.

6 January: *Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de los Reyes* (Valle Gran Rey).
17 January: *Fiesta de San Sebastián*, patron saint of the capital (San Sebastián).
1-6 September: *Semana Colombina* or 'Columbus Week' (San Sebastián).
3 October: *Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (San Sebastián and Puntallana).

RESTAURANTS IN GOMERA There are very few restaurants on the island, just occasional cafés and bars. In San Sebastián the best place to eat is at the Parador (state-run inn). Another attractive inn is at Las Rosas, on the main road beyond Hermigua, where they provide good regional cuisine and occasional demonstrations of *el silbo*.

NIGHTLIFE IN GOMERA You've come to the wrong place.

San Sebastián

The capital and chief port of Gomera, San Sebastián is a pretty little town of white houses clustered round a small harbour, with a backdrop of green hills and rocky cliffs. It acquired its name through being founded on San Sebastián's Day. One of the most interesting sights is the **Torre del Conde**, part of the fort built between 1447 and 1450 by Fernán Peraza, first Count of Gomera; it was here that Fernán Peraza Junior sat out a siege and where his widow entertained Columbus. The sea used to reach right up to the fort, a stocky stone building of 50 ft, with 5 ft thick walls penetrated by narrow slits for windows and arrow-shooting, but it is now surrounded by banana plantations and tall palm trees. The fort now houses a small museum (open 10am-1pm and 4am 6pm) with a collection of native artefacts and *conquistadores'* weapons.

Another monument connected with Columbus is the church in Calle General Franco, **Iglesia de la Asunción**, also said to have been built by Fernán Peraza; Columbus is supposed to have heard his last Mass here before sailing across to find America. The old gothic nave is about all that remains of the original building; most of the present church dates from the 18th century. Higher up the same street at No. 60 is the so-called **Casa de Colón**, 'House of Columbus', though it's thought to be of rather later construction. Nevertheless there are several interesting old houses, usually noticeable by their air of dusty dignity and stone escutcheons above the front door. Some of them date from the late 15th/early 16th century, but most are of 18th century construction, built during a mini economic boom.

A final building of note is the **Capilla de San Sebastián**, first church on the island, containing a wooden image of the town's patron saint.

The town's **parador** – best hotel on the island – is a delightful modern building in Spanish-colonial style, set above the sea on a cliff to the north of town; non-residents are welcome in the restaurant. North past the turning to the parador, a track leads to **Puntallana** where the island's

patroness is enshrined in the hermitage: Our Lady of Guadelupe. A major local festival in October involves a *romería* or pilgrimage to honour her and a boat procession to take her into San Sebastián for further celebration.

Around the Island

Heading north out of San Sebastián, the road to Hermigua climbs steadily up the valley of the Barranco de la Villa, giving fine views back down over the town and across to Tenerife. On a hillside above town stands an impressive statue of Christ by the modern Brazilian artist Bruno Giggi.

High in the mountains the road enters the **Bosque del Cedro**, or 'Forest of Cedar', though the vegetation mostly comprises native laurels, beeches, pines, junipers and – most notable of all – tall white-flowering heather trees (*Erica arborea*), some 20 ft or more in height. This forest is part of Gomera's National Park, one of the four in the Canaries (there are only nine in all Spain) where the native vegetation is preserved and protected. The air is fresh and cool up here, carrying the scent of pine and resin and heather; apart from the twittering of sparrows and cooing of rock doves there is nothing to break the silence.

Coming out of a long tunnel about 9 miles from San Sebastián the road suddenly affords some of the best views in the island, across thickly carpeted green valleys and rocky peaks to the island of Tenerife and Mount Teide. Soon the descent begins into the valley of **Hermigua**, one of the island's most fertile areas with acres of banana plantations divided by a ribbon of red-roofed white houses. Just before Hermigua there is a large new dam to help conserve Gomera's natural water supplies and to irrigate the precious plantations and terraces. Still descending, the road passes a local tourist attraction on the left, an *artesanía* or crafts centre where you can watch women at the looms and buy souvenirs. Almost opposite is Hermigua's parish church, part of an old Dominican convent, **Iglesia de Santo Domingo** (16th century). Hermigua itself used to be the next largest community after San Sebastián, but its population now is barely 3,500. Beyond Hermigua the road turns inland towards the village of **Agulo**, with another *artesanía* and a curious Moorish-looking little domed church. Still climbing, some 3½ miles from Hermigua you reach the pretty roadside inn of **Las Rosas**, perched on the edge of a lovely green valley surrounded by terraced hillsides; it's an excellent place to break the rather tedious drive along twisty roads and to witness the occasional *silbo* demonstrations. Next village is **Vallehermoso** (liter

ally 'Valley Beautiful'), just below the extraordinary rock formations called **El Cano**. It's a lush green valley full of bananas and date palms – the palms that give Gomera its delicious *miel de palma*, 'palm honey', derived from the concentrated sap (*guarapo*) of the tree trunk. A rough track leads north to Vallehermoso's tiny port, **Puerto de Vallehermoso**; just round the coast to the west is the natural phenomenon of **Los Organos** ('The Organ Pipes'). These basalt 'pipes' in the vertical cliff face have to be seen from the sea, being inaccessible by land. (To hire a boat, ask at the Club Náutico in San Sebastián, Calle del Conde; tel. 87 10 53).

From Vallehermoso the poorly surfaced road heads south west through the hamlet of Arure to **Valle Gran Rey** 14 miles away, in a valley of the same name. It's a beautiful valley (pace Vallehermoso) filled with more banana plantations and palm trees and edged with tiny terraces growing cereals, potatoes and vines – this is one of Gomera's main agricultural areas. Down on the coast below is a rare sandy beach and two natural rock pools, **Los Charcos del Conde y de la Condesa**, where, so they say, the Count and Countess of Gomera used to bathe. With one or two small cafés, this spot is undoubtedly one of the tourist attractions of Gomera. Back up the valley, returning by the same twisty road, a fork right leads south-east towards **Chipude**, following another poorly surfaced road. Chipude is known as Gomera's pottery centre, producing simple replicas of the Guanche pots that have a distinctly African look to them. A very steep and all but impassable track leads down to **La Rajita** on the coast, more usually reached by boat, now the site of a fish factory. From Chipude eastwards, beneath the peak of Garajonay, the road heads down to the coast via **Alajero** with an attractive old church, and through **Santiago**, a sizeable fishing village with another tuna-canning factory and a small stony beach.

To complete the round trip, it's possible (just) to follow the rough road up the hills, via the southern edges of the Bosque del Cedro again, and back down to the coast; 17 miles may not seem too much, but the journey will take much longer than you think – don't miss the boat!

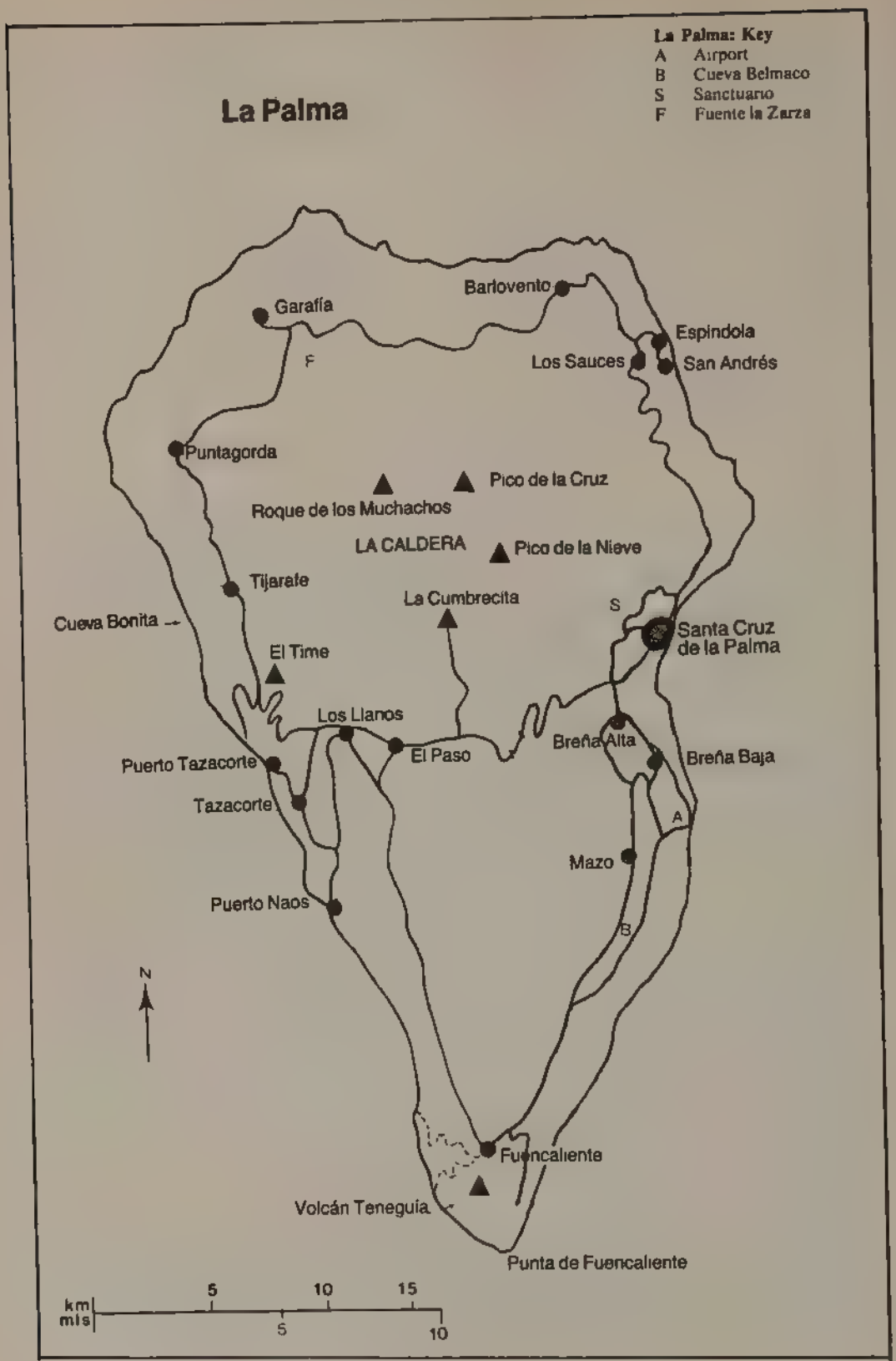
9 La Palma

Santa Cruz de la Palma, p102 Around the Island, p104

This is the island they call *La Isla Bonita*, the Pretty Island, so green and beautiful and with such a variety of scenic attractions that it's surprising more tourists have not discovered it yet. The steep coasts of the coastline – there are only two or three beaches – rise to a high plateau in the north, in the centre of which lies the world's largest volcanic crater, La Caldera de Taburiente. The island's highest peaks encircle the crater – Roque de los Muchachos (7,960 ft), Pico de la Cruz (7,700 ft), Pico de la Nieve (7,480 ft) and La Cumbrecita (6,170 ft) – which has a single opening to the southwest along the deep ravine called Barranco de las Angustias. South of the crater the narrow dorsal ridge bisects the island, extending to an area of active volcanoes at the southern tip, including La Palma's most recently active volcano, Teneguía.

But it's not the volcanic nature of La Palma that leaves the most lasting impression; it's the lush vegetation, both glorious natural plant life and richly cultivated agricultural areas – bananas, vines, almond trees that cast their snowy blossoms over the hillsides throughout March and April. For this, the most north-westerly of the Canary Islands, has abundant subterranean water reserves, amply supplied by *los alisios*, the moisture carrying trade winds, conserved in large modern dams and a hundred mirror-like reservoirs.

West of La Palma is the vast empty Atlantic, offering magnificent sunsets and cloud pictures. It's thought that the nonexistent island of San Borondón – supposedly discovered by the 7th century Irish sailing monk, St Brendan – was either a mirage, a result of one of these cloud pictures, or an attempt by the superstitious to turn the archipelago into


La Palma
La Palma: Key
A Airport
B Cueva Belmaco
S Sanctuario
F Fuente la Zarza
Barlovento
Garafía
Espindola
Los Sauces
San Andrés
F
Puntagorda
Pico de la Cruz
Roque de los Muchachos
LA CALDERA
Pico de la Nieve
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La Cumbrecita
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Cueva Bonita
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El Time
Los Llanos
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fourteen islands, not thirteen (seven major islands plus the six minor ones off Lanzarote and Fuerteventura). Anyway the island has never been found, and all that remains to recall St Brendan's doubtful presence here is the village of San Borondón south of Tazacorte.

History. Alonso de Lugo began the conquest of La Palma in 1492. He arrived on the west coast near Tazacorte 89 years after Jean de Bethencourt made the first attempt and 40 years after Diego de Herrera died in another unsuccessful attempt to take the island (Herrera was the son-in-law of Fernán Peraza, first Count of Gomera). Evidently the Guanches of La Palma were a particularly fierce lot, and it was only through a dirty trick that de Lugo finally managed to subdue the last rebellious band; he invited them to a peace conference in order to lure them out of their impregnable natural fortress, the Caldera, then slaughtered or enslaved the lot. Their king, Tanausu, preferred to starve himself to death rather than suffer exile and slavery under the Spaniards.

The capital, Santa Cruz de la Palma, was founded on 3 May 1493, this date marking the end of the conquest in La Palma. Colonized by a hotchpotch of Spaniards, Portuguese, Frenchmen and Flemings, the port soon grew into one of the most important in the Canary Islands, visited by those Spanish-American adventurers as they sailed to and fro across the Atlantic. And like San Sebastián de la Gomera, Santa Cruz suffered numerous pirate raids throughout the 16th, 17th and early 18th centuries; in 1533 the Frenchman known as Peg Leg ransacked and burnt half the town, but in 1585 the valiant Palmerans managed to see off Sir Francis Drake himself; even sinking his flagship. These frequent maritime attacks led to the islanders building numerous defensive forts, some of which still stand today, the Castilla Real in Santa Cruz for example. The export of sugar and wine led to La Palma's early wealth and prestige, attracting rich merchants to settle in the island and build the lovely old houses that make Santa Cruz such an attractive town.

Today. Third smallest of the Canaries (280 square miles in area), La Palma today has the third largest population after Gran Canaria and Tenerife, with 80,000 inhabitants, 15,500 of whom live in the capital. Most Palmerans are involved in agriculture, especially bananas, vines and tobacco – La Palma's *puros* (cigars) are of a quality admired even in Havana – and the almond trees are not simply grown for ornamental purposes, contributing to the *quesos de almendra* (almond cheese) that are one of the island's culinary specialities. Silk-production, weaving, embroidery and basketwork are the main craft industries, and fishing makes a small addition to the local economy. Tourism is as yet only in

the very early stages here, though La Palma has a good modern airport and is far from inaccessible. Small holiday complexes are growing up around Puerto Naos on the west coast and Breña Baja on the east, but the island's accommodation is still confined mainly to the capital.

Restaurants in La Palma. As with accommodation, most of La Palma's restaurants are to be found in Santa Cruz, with one or two good little fish restaurants in Breña Baja, Los Llanos de Aridane and Puerto Naos. Otherwise they tend to be the typical café-bar sort of establishments with none of the choice or elaborate cuisine of the two main islands. Similarly, **nightlife** in the island is minimal, concentrated in the hotels and bars of the capital.

Festivals in La Palma. The island's most famous festival, dating from 1680, occurs only once every five years: *La Bajada de la Virgen* (the Descent of the Virgin), in honour of La Palma's patroness, the Virgin of the Snows. The image of the Virgin is carried down from her sanctuary above Santa Cruz and installed in the church of San Salvador, the focal point for month-long celebrations. These include a sort of passion play of unknown origin, and a curious 'dialogue between Castle and Ship' – the latter being a stone replica of Columbus's *Santa Maria* that stands in Plaza General Franco in Santa Cruz.

17 January: *Fiesta de San Antonio Abad* (Fuencaliente).
2 February: *Fiesta de San Blas* (Mazo).
February: *Carnaval,* or Winter Festival (Santa Cruz).
3 March: *Fiesta de San Vicente* (Garafía).
19 March: *Fiesta del Patriarca San José* (Breña Baja and Fuencaliente).
May/June: Corpus Christi (celebrated everywhere, but especially in Mazo and Santa Cruz).
August/September: *La Bajada de la Virgen*, once every five years, but with a lesser annual festival honouring *La Virgen de las Nieves* (Santa Cruz).

Santa Cruz de La Palma

The capital of La Palma shares the same name as Tenerife's capital, hence the need to distinguish them by calling this one Santa Cruz de La Palma, the other one Santa Cruz de Tenerife. (Incidentally, La Palma sometimes creates nominal confusion with the city of Las Palmas in Gran Canaria, or with Palma de Mallorca, a popular holiday spot in the Balearic Islands. This one, remember, always has 'La' in front of it.)

It's a very attractive town situated on the east coast and surrounded by high hills. Many of the streets are steep and narrow, climbing out of town to the rim of La Caldereta, an extinct volcanic crater to the south, but a wide avenue, **Avenida Marítima**, follows the waterfront along a stretch of level ground. Avenida Maritima has many beautiful examples of typical Canary Island architecture, displaying single or double-storey balconies made from the native laurel, often intricately carved. Parallel to Avenida Blas Pérez González, the southern extension of Avenida Maritima, there are more handsome old colonial mansions in the town's main commercial and shopping street, **Calle Real**, their elegant façade lending a touch of class to the neighbouring shops and offices. At the end of Calle Real is the **Plaza de España**, heart of the capital. It's a charming small square with a stone fountain (built 1776) in the centre, surrounded by interesting buildings, including the **Ayuntamiento** (Town Hall), built in 1563 with a renaissance portico. One of the most popular snapshots of Santa Cruz features the nearby church, taken from under the Town Hall's arches; this is the **Iglesia de San Salvador**, mother church of La Palma (founded 1500), with a very remarkable renaissance façade. Inside is a magnificent carved altarpiece, a *mudejar* (Moorish) style carved wooden ceiling and a rich treasury of paintings and images donated by wealthy merchants or *emigrantes* who had made their fortunes in the New World.

North from the Plaza, Calle General Mola leads to **Plaza General Franco**, beside the wide **Barranco de las Nieves**, a ravine marking the north boundary of central Santa Cruz. In this square stands the full size stone replica of Colombus's ship, *Santa Maria*. Now housing a small naval museum, the ship is 'dressed overall' with flags and flowers for the five-yearly festival of *La Bajada de la Virgen*. By a small fort, **Castillo de la Virgen**, on the north bank of the Barranco, a road heads up into the hills to the **Sanctuario de Nuestra Señora de las Nieves**, the shrine in which the Virgin of the Snows is kept. The image itself is of unknown origin, but the shrine is thought to date from the early 15th century.

The small fort on the waterfront is the **Castillo Real** (17th century), now a National Monument. Just a few hundred yards away on Avenida Maritima is La Palma's 3 star **parador**, the island's No. 1 hotel, overlooking the sea. Past the hotel on the quay is a small **Tourist Office**, where you can get excellent information about the town and the rest of the island. The **Muelle** (quay) curves south round the port full of fishing boats, yachts and occasional inter-island ferries, watched over by tall white office blocks and old colonial mansions side by side, nestling under a steep hillside.

Santa Cruz also boasts a small **Natural History Museum** in Calle Van Walle,mission fee).

Around the Island

La Palma's biggest natural attraction is the National Park of **La Caldera de Taburiente**, the volcanic crater. To reach it from Santa Cruz, take the road west out of town to the rim of La Caldereta, the small crater south of town – there are marvellous views from up here – then turn inland towards the hills. The well surfaced road twists and turns up **Cumbre Nueva**, the dorsal ridge that divides the southern peninsula, and passes through a tunnel under the summit. About 2½ miles on, a fork right takes you up again towards **La Cumbrecita** ('Little Summit'), right on the crater's edge. La Caldera, literally 'the Cauldon', has a circumference of 17 miles, a diameter of over 5 miles at the widest point and an average depth of 2,200 ft. But the data don't matter when compared with the humble sensation provoked by the views. To the north are the highest peaks, **Roque de los Muchachos** and **Pico de la Cruz**, to the east is **Pico de la Nieve**, to the west is the gap of **Barranco de las Angustias**, and in the centre far below is this vast green sea of dense vegetation, mostly tall Canary pines. La Caldera was once a Guanche stronghold, and it doesn't take much imagination to picture those primitive, semi-naked warriors furtively dodging between trees to avoid Alonso de Lugo and his Spanish soldiers.

Continuing west along the transverse route from Santa Cruz, the first village is **El Paso**, centre of La Palma's silk and tobacco industries and famous for its almond blossoms in spring. Now the road descends into the fertile **Valle de Aridane**, through **Los Llanos de Aridane**, whose name means 'the Plains of Aridane', recalling an ancient Guanche settlement here. It's La Palma's second largest town (population 15,000), set among banana plantations and fields of tobacco plants and fruit trees. A fine view of the valley can be obtained from **El Time** (1,900 ft) across the Barranco de las Angustias to the north; the road from Los Llanos has to twist itself into knots descending the ravine then climbing out again but the journey is worth the effort. At El Time's feet is the Barranco leading east into the crater mouth, to the right is the blue-green Atlantic, and across to the south is the fertile Valle de Aridane.

North from El Time, along an increasingly poor road through the not very interesting villages of **Tijarafe** and **Puntagorda**, is the fascinating site of ancient stone inscriptions, **Fuente de la Zarza** (6½ miles beyond Puntagorda, near Garafía). Once presumed to be the work of the Guanches, it now looks as if these extraordinary spirals and whorls – like giant fingerprints – are immeasurably more ancient, perhaps dating from 1800-1500 BC. Some authorities point out that they bear certain similarities to Bronze Age inscriptions in other primitive Atlantic cultures,

and surmise that they were linked to religious or fertility rites, but who exactly drew these patterns and what they really mean will probably never be known.

Between **Garafía** and **Barlovento** in the north of the island there are several picturesque but poorly surfaced roads along the forested outer flanks of La Caldera. For the moment we'll continue south from El Time.

At the mouth of the great Barranco de Las Angustias is **Puerto de Tazacorte**, 5 miles from Los Llanos. This is where Alonso de Lugo landed in 1492; now it is the small port of Tazacorte itself, a small inland town 2½ miles away and containing more of those attractive old colonial mansions. At Puerto there is a beach and one or two cafés, and here you can hire a boat to visit **La Cueva Bonita** about 7 miles up the coast. This natural grotto penetrated by Atlantic waves – the name means 'Pretty Cave' – has been favourably compared with Capri's famous Blue Grotto. South along the coast is **Puerto Naos**; with its fine sandy black beach and good swimming, this little fishing port looks like being a favourite future holiday resort and already the tourist development has begun.

At the far south of the island lies the small town of **Fuencaliente**, surrounded by pine forests and vineyards – this is La Palma's chief wine-producing area, famous for its *malvasia*. The town's name derives from the hot springs that once bubbled to the surface round here but these have long since disappeared amid frequent volcanic eruptions. The southernmost point, **Punta de Fuencaliente**, is an arid volcanic wasteland, scene of La Palma's most recent eruptions, with the tourist attractions of **Volcán Teneguía** (last erupted 1971, causing local evacuation but no casualties) and **Volcán San Antonio** just to the south of town.

Now the main road heads north up the eastern side of the dorsal ridge, with a branch off to **Cueva Belmaco** – more prehistoric inscriptions and marvellous views – and a high road heading for Villa de Mazo, usually known simply as **Mazo**. Just below Mazo on the coast is La Palma's airport, near Breña Baja, centre of a growing tourist resort with a beach and natural swimming pools and a steady encroachment of holiday villas especially around Playa de los Cancajos.

From here the road north into Santa Cruz, 5 miles away, enters the small crater of la Caldereta and passes through a tunnel under **Risco de la Concepción** on the crater rim.

One final excursion from the capital follows the C.830 north from town, skirting the lower slopes of the mountains, twisting and turning around the steep sides of the barrancos. This area is even greener than the north-west coast, offering splendid views down to the sea and

crossing pretty valleys full of trickling streams and waterfalls. Near the small town of **Los Sauces** ('the Willows'), heart of rich agricultural land growing sugarcane and vines, are the coastal villages of **San Andrés** and **Puerto Espindola**, with natural rocky swimming pools and small fishing ports. Inland from Los Sauces, the dense subtropical jungle of **Bosque de los Tilos** contains some of La Palma's richest native vegetation, including the laurels (*tilos*) and giant ferns. Beyond Los Sauces, the road continues to **Barlovento**, northernmost village in the island, then meanders across the numerous barrancos in the north to Garafía, near Fuente de la Zarza (see above).

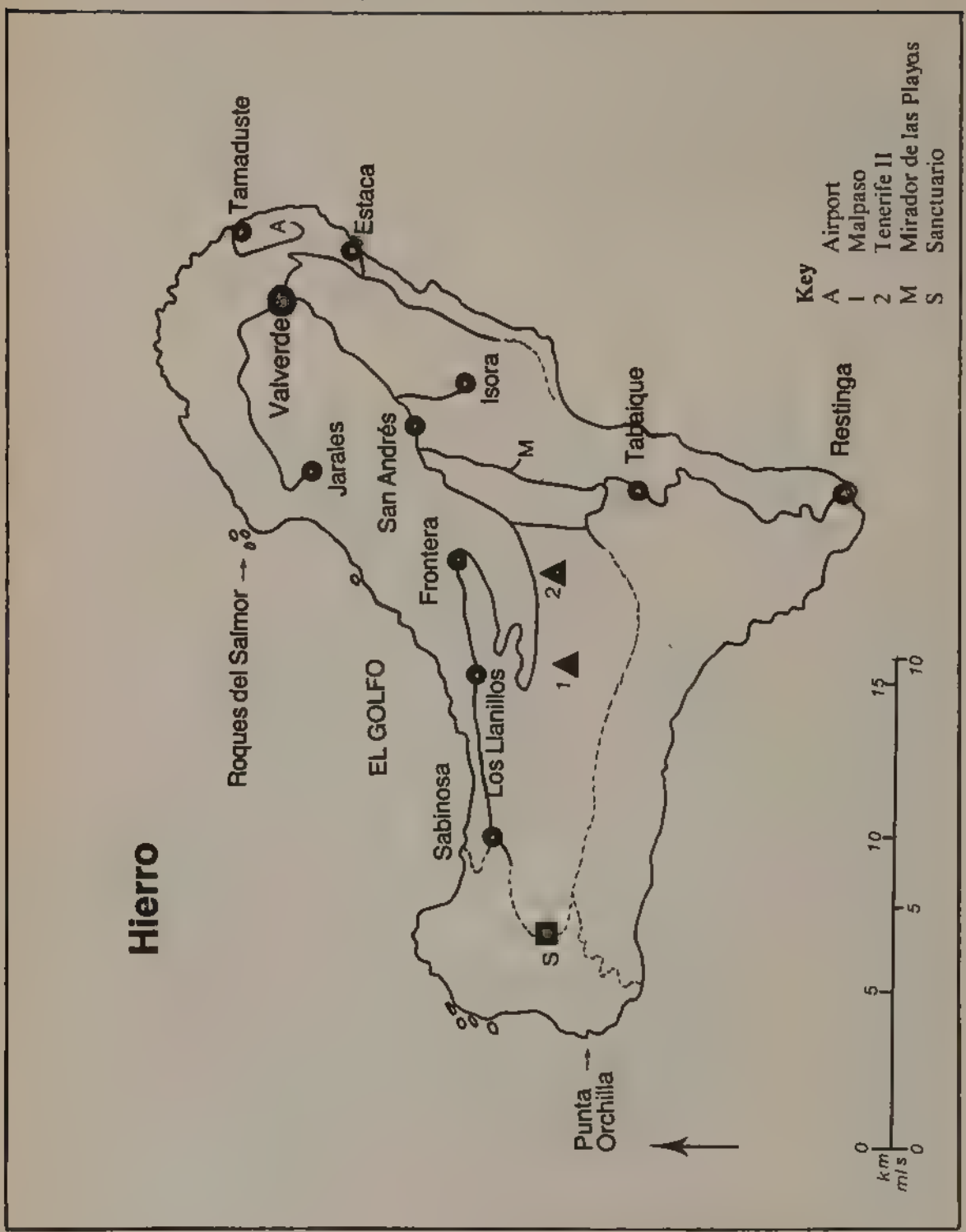
10 Hierro

Valverde, p110 Around the Island, p110

Smallest of the Canary Islands, only 107 square miles in area, Hierro is also the most remote, lying 33 miles south-west of Gomera. Ancient Arab geographers and medieval Europe set 0° Longitude at Hierro's westernmost headland of Punta Orchilla, and this was long considered to be the edge of the world; it was only in 1884 that the world finally agreed 0° Longitude should run through Greenwich. Even today Hierro remains an isolated outpost of Europe, despite having a small airport; the coastline is steep and rocky, lacking in natural anchorages, and it was this that caused Spanish *conquistadores* to turn away in favour of Gomera, La Palma and the other islands even through Hierro was one of the first of the Canaries to be conquered. A parador has been built on the east coast but it has not yet opened and the only accommodation at present consists of a handful of 1 or 2-star guest houses.

Yet Hierro does have its attractions quite apart from the refreshing lack of commercialism. The scenery is beautiful, though quite different from any of the other islands. From the steep coastline the hills reach to a long semicircular ridge curving round El Golfo, the wide north-western bay that is the submerged basin of an ancient crater, the slopes covered in dense forests and upland pastures dotted with goats grazing among wild flowers. The island's volcanic origins are very obvious in the numerous cones and lava flows, especially round Restinga in the south and near the capital, Valverde, in the north, though there have been no major eruptions here in many years. As the tourist brochures say, 'It's an ideal place for peaceful vacations and close communication with Nature.'

History. Jean de Bethencourt's early expeditions included a brief excursion to Hierro in 1405. Apparently there were very few Guanches – they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2 Tenerife II
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were called Bimbaches here – the native population having already been decimated by Moorish slave traders, and when he arrived at the present day Bahia de Naos in southern Hierro, the Guanche King Armiche and his companions promptly surrendered to him and were enslaved. First colonized by the Norman families who'd come with Bethencourt, Hierro's capital was soon established at Valverde. Some forty years later the island was inherited by the Counts of Gomera, Fernán Peraza and his descendants, and it became one of the *islas de señorío*, like Gomera, Fuerteventura and Lanzarote. The island's name is thought to derive from a native word, *hero* or *ecero*, meaning 'strong', though some authorities claim it to be a corruption of Herrera, the name of one of the first Counts of Gomera.

But Hierro never attained the importance of those other islands, due principally to the inaccessible coastline. Throughout the centuries, Hierro and its capital remained isolated and undeveloped, with consequently few of the colonial mansions or other man-made monuments to compare with the rest of the Canaries.

Today. The entire population of Hierro numbers less than 7,500, of whom 4,000 live in the capital, Valverde. This island suffered more than most from emigration, with the *Herreños*, inhabitants of Hierro, habitually leaving home to seek their fortunes in the larger islands or far away in South America. Of those who remain, most are involved in agriculture; there is no industry, no tourism and very little fishing Hierro has only one decent port, Puerto de la Estaca, where the inter-island ferries arrive. Crops include cereals, potatoes, grapes and other fruit – apples, figs, peaches – and tobacco; there are a few banana plantations but the climate is really too dry for them, though Hierro does have some subterranean water reserves. Goats and sheep grazing on the many upland pastures provide one of Hierro's specialities, cheese – *quesadilla* or *queso de miel y gofío* (with honey and *gofío*), which is famous throughout the Canary Islands and makes a welcome contribution to the island's none-too-healthy economy.

Restaurants in Hierro. As with hotel accommodation, restaurant facilities here are scarce, comprising a mere handful of small bar-cafés. **Nightlife?** Forget it.

Festivals in Hierro. As in La Palma, the island's principal fiesta occurs only once every few years, four in the case of Hierro, and involves a 'Descent of the Virgin' (*Bajada de la Virgen*. The image is of *Nuestra*

Señora de los Reyes, Our Lady of the Kings, patroness of the island and enthroned in a sanctuary at La Dehesa in the far west of the island.
June (every four years): *La Bajada de la Virgen* (Valverde).
10 October: *Fiesta de la Virgen del Rosario* (Valverde).
28 October: *Fiesta de San Simeón* (Sabinosa).

Valverde

Hierro's capital is the only one in all the Canaries situated away from the coast, on the *meseta* or central plateau. Visitors arrive either by plane, landing at the modern airport 5 miles away on the north coast, or by ferry at the tiny port of Estaca (properly Puerto de la Estaca) 5 miles to the east. From afar the island looks like a barren cluster of hills and valleys surrounded by a black rocky coastline, but gradually the pastures and forests assert themselves in a display of greenery as you climb up towards town. The loosely knit agglomeration of red-roofed white houses lies in a shallow mountain bowl above the sea, surrounded by rolling hills and fields, a picturesque sight beneath the brilliant blue sky and constant sunshine. But there's little to cause a visitor to linger here, save the modest *hostales* (guest houses) and few restaurants. The island's principal church, **Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción** (built 1767), facing onto Valverde's small central plaza, has a tall belltower from which the islanders could watch for pirates and other intruders arriving on the coast below. Otherwise there are no monuments to admire, just the quiet to and fro of the *Herreños* going about their business.

Around the Island

On the east coast four miles south of **Estaca**, the small hamlet and harbour where inter-island ferries dock, a new parador stands near the black sand-and-pebble beach of Las Playecitas, waiting to be completed (opening date not yet known). Above here, on a road that runs south-east from Valverde, a huddle of miniscule hamlets – **Los Llanos, La Laja, Isora** – gaze down to the coast, over 2,500 ft below. The main road from Valverde passes through **Tiñor**, notable for its volcanic ash 'pyramids' rising above green fields, and **San Andrés**, centre of this highland agricultural area. One noticeable feature of this region is the abundance of fig trees standing in circular stone enclosures; these trees are among the islanders' most precious possessions, handed down from generation to generation in complicated inheritances, with several people

owning parts of each tree. The road then continues west, past the turning to **Mirador de las Playas,** offering spectacular views down to the coast round the unfinished *parador*, following the mountain ridge west around the crater of El Golfo, with several splendid viewpoints down to either coast. The highest peaks are **Tenerife II** (4,650 ft) and **Alto de Malpaso** to the west, Hierro's highest mountain (4,900 ft) with a *mirador* at the top from which there are really magnificent views over the west of the island and down to El Golfo. It's a region of native flora, including the *margarita herreña* or Hierro daisy, twisted junipers doubled over by the wind, heather and the local *tajinaste*, a species of the Echium family found only in Hierro.

Below Malpaso the road creeps down towards El Golfo, coming first to **Frontera** the island's wine-producing centre. In Frontera is an example of one curious local custom: the belltower of the little church, **Temple de Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria** (built 1651), is separate, situated a few hundred yards away on the top of a small volcanic cone. Now the road heads west through the tiny communities of **Tigaday** and **Los Llanillos** towards **Sabinosa,** most westerly village in the Canary Islands. Sabinosa lies beneath the steep hills at the far west corner of El Golfo, a tidy sprinkling of white houses against the dark green forests, some 1,000 ft above the sea. The village is known for its 'medicinal' waters, and visitors can still bathe in the nearby *balneario* or **Pozo de la Salud** ('Well of Health'), down towards the coast. A footpath from Sabinosa climbs the barren western peaks to the **Sanctuario de la Virgen de los Reyes,** a little walled sanctuary encircling the red-roofed shrine which the island's patroness inhabits. During the four-yearly fiesta in her honour, the *Herreños* carry the image of the Virgin across the hills and valleys to Valverde nearly 30 miles away, and there parade her round the streets amid much singing and dancing and general displays of local folklore.

Still further west is the headland of **Punta Orchilla,** boundary of the Old World, with a lighthouse nearby to warn ships away from this rocky coast.

Back up the ridge of mountains, a road branches off south towards Restinga and the heel of this boot-shaped island. On the way you pass through **Tabaique,** second only in size to Valverde though the population is barely 700, amid a beautiful region of pine forests and native vegetation. It's a marvellous place for leisurely rambling, with lovely views down over the empty coastline below **El Julán** and **Dehesa,** two volcanic peaks (respectively 3,560 ft and 2,900 ft). If you follow the path west you eventually reach the venerated Sanctuario (see above). El Julán is worth a visit, inaccessible as it is except on foot, just to see the

ancient inscriptions; these are obviously symbols of something, not mere doodles, but no one has yet deciphered their meaning and neither has anyone successfully explained how they got here. Was it the work of Hierro's Guanches, the Bimbaches? Or perhaps some even more ancient unlettered people? The experts have so far been unable to agree, while the layman can only stand and look with awe and fascination.

Beyond Tabaique the road – a rough track really – descends towards **Restinga** on the coast, in an area of volcanic wasteland. This little fishing port, more easily accessible by boat from Estaca, has one or two natural swimming pools amid the rocks; after a dip you can enjoy a meal of fresh fish in one of the café-bars in the village.

North-west of Valverde, there is a road that curves round the northern limit of the semisubmerged crater, via the villages of **Mocanal, Erese** and **Guarazoca,** to a truly superb viewpoint above the bay near the small village of **Jarales** with another little sanctuary. From this mirador the sheer rocky precipice falls away beneath your feet to the sloping green shelf of the crater floor, washed by rippling ocean waves and fringed with white foam. And just off this north-western point are the inaccessible **Roques del Salmor,** inhabited only by birds and Hierro's last 'giant lizards'. Not so giant now, these creatures seldom reach 3 ft in length but according to fossilized evidence their ancestors were 15 ft or more from blunt ugly nose to tip of tail.

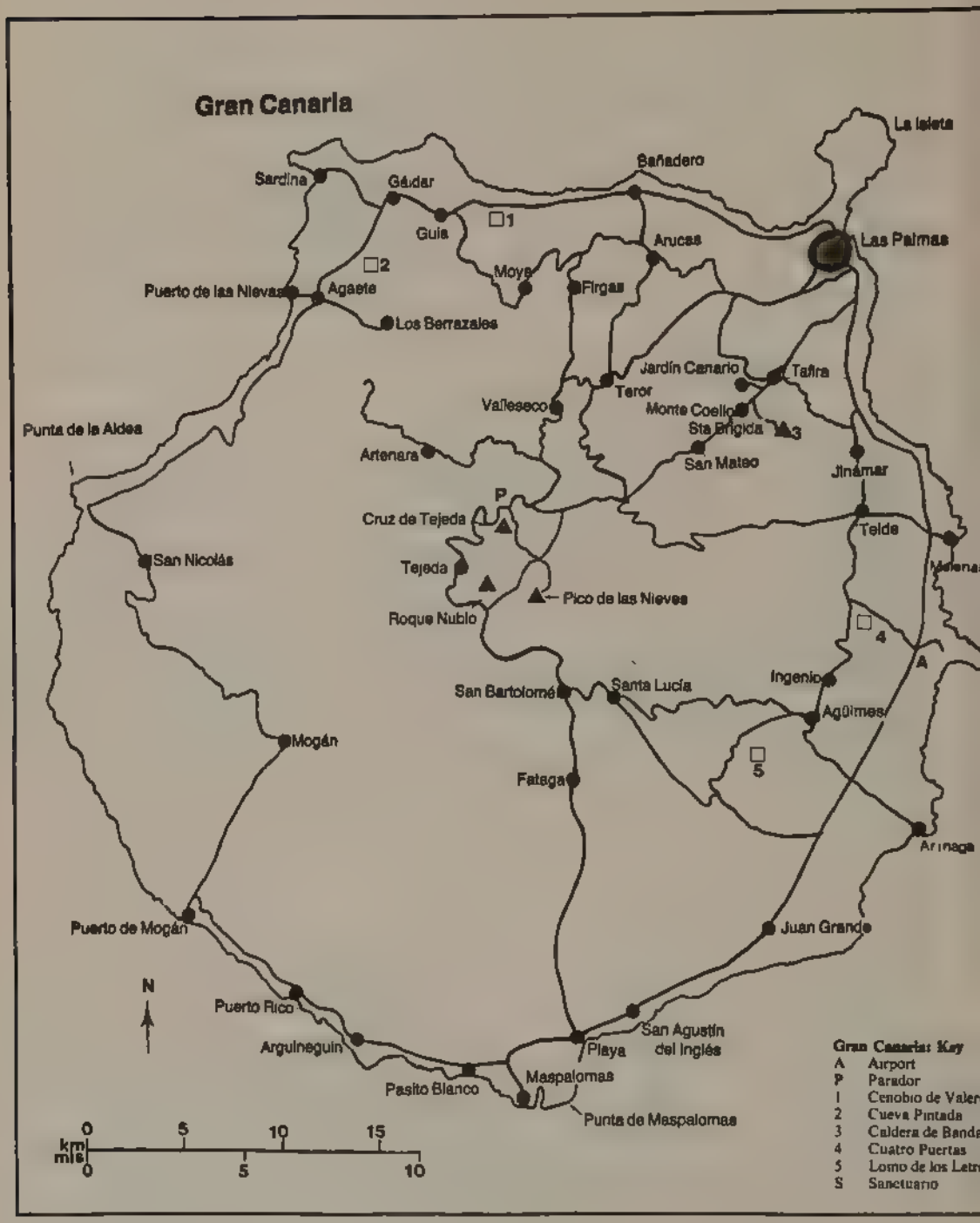
One final excursion follows the road north from the airport to **Tamaduste** on the coast, the nearest thing Hierro has to a holiday resort, with natural swimming pools in the rocks, a bar or two, and, on a calm day, a blissful air of utter tranquillity.

11 Gran Canaria

Las Palmas, p120 Around the North West, p125 The Mountains, p128 The East Coast, p129 The South, p131

'Grand Canary' as the English call it, this is in fact not the largest of the Canary Islands; at 602 square miles in area, it comes third behind Tenerife and Fuerteventura. The Gran part of its name, meaning 'Great', commemorates a graceful act of recognition by the Spanish following the Guanches' valiant defence of their island. 'Great' or 'Grand', Gran Canaria still deserves the epithet. Las Palmas is a city of superlatives – largest, busiest, most colourful, most entertaining city in the archipelago. The landscape is at least as varied as in any of the other islands, ranging from the acres of sand dunes in the south to verdant mountain peaks in the centre. With Tenerife, this is the island that most travellers know best; it's visited by cruise ships and cargo boats, has a large international airport, a plentiful supply of hotel accommodation, and a host of diversions from bizarre to banal. Everything is here – that's why they call Gran Canaria 'A Continent in Miniature'.

Geography. This is the circular island, situated roughly equidistant from Tenerife to the west and Fuerteventura to the east, with the inland hills rising to a peak in the centre, reaching a height of 6,340 ft at Pico de las Nieves. The most characteristic feature of Gran Canaria's landscape is the *barrancos*, scoring dusty trails down the hillsides, especially to the south, while the north is greener and more fertile. And just a few miles from Las Palmas is one of the island's most memorable features, the deep volcanic crater of La Caldera de Bandama, definitely a sight that every visitor should see. The northern coastline is generally steep and rocky, except round the neck of La Isleta, that little bump at the north-eastern tip of the island. The southern coast, on the other hand,


Gran Canaria
La Isleta
Bañadero
Sardina
Gáldar
Guía
1
Arucas
Las Palmas
2
Moya
Firgas
Puerto de las Nieves
Agaete
Los Berrazales
Jardín Canario
Tafira
Teror
Valleseco
Monte Coello
Sta Brígida
3
Punta de la Aldea
Artenara
San Mateo
Jinámar
P
Cruz de Tejeda
Telde
San Nicolás
Tejeda
Pico de las Nieves
Roque Nublo
4
A
Ingenio
San Bartolomé
Santa Lucía
Agüimes
Mogán
5
Fataga
Arinaga
Puerto de Mogán
Juan Grande
N
Puerto Rico
San Agustín
del Inglés
Arguineguín
Playa
Maspalomas
Pasito Blanco
Punta de Maspalomas
0 5 10 15
km
mls
0 5 10
Gran Canaria: Key
A Airport
P Parador
1 Cenobio de Valer
2 Cueva Pintada
3 Caldera de Band
4 Cuatro Puertas
5 Lomo de los Letr
S Sanctuario

particularly round Maspalomas, is a dreamland of golden sand dunes rolling between palm trees and ocean like everyone's ideal desert island.

Talking of deserts, Gran Canaria has a serious shortage of water. Hundreds of wells and subterranean channels make use of what underground reserves there are, but the lack of rainfall and rapid evaporation – combined with a relative density of population and industry making heavy demands on the water supplies – means that every drop is precious. There are over sixty sizeable reservoirs, but still the islanders have to import water, and the problem can only get worse. What's surprising is that Gran Canaria should have managed so well up to now.

History. In 1402 Jean de Bethencourt made an abortive attempt on the island, landing at Gando on the east coast, near where the airport is today. But the conquest of Gran Canaria really began 76 years later when Juan Rejón was charged by the Catholic Kings with the mission of subduing the natives, converting them to Christianity and then showing them what civilization was. There was a certain urgency about all this, because the Condes de Gomera – already lording it over Hierro, Fuerteventura and Lanzarote as well as Gomera – were thought to be casting a greedy eye towards the larger as yet unconquered islands of Gran Canaria and Tenerife. So Rejón and his soldiers disembarked at La Isleta's beaches in the north-east and built themselves an encampment on the edge of the Barranco de Guiniguada, using the abundant local palms to help construct a palisade encircling the camp. Thus the first Spanish settlement on the island acquired its name: Real de las Palmas, or 'Camp of the Palms', later to become simply Las Palmas. Here on the banks of the Guiniguada ravine the Spaniards had their first battle with the Guanches, just a taste of what was to follow.

But Rejón meanwhile had so thoroughly fallen out of favour with his men and with the Catholic Kings that he was replaced in 1480 by Pedro de Vera. Aided by Alonso de Lugo who built a fort at Agaete in the north-west, de Vera set about conquering the island. He shortly came up against the valiant Doramas, warrior king of the Guanches; Doramas died in the ensuing battle but his men took refuge in the mountains and prepared to fight again. At Tirajana the Guanches had a partial revenge, but finally the Spaniards captured one of the their surviving leaders, Tenesor Semidán. His seizure and conversion – he was baptised as Fernando Guanarteme – marked the beginning of the end for the *Canarios*, the final skirmishes taking place at Arguineguín in the south. Traditionally, the conquest of Gran Canaria is said to have ended on 29 April 1483, though the island was not formally incorporated into the Spanish Crown until 20 January 1487.

Only five years later Las Palmas was a sufficiently prosperous port for Columbus to call in en route for America. One of his three ships needed repairs and evidently the island's capital already boasted the necessary carpenters, tar-wielders and other craftsmen. Columbus was suitably impressed and duly returned on later voyages to and from the Indies.

In 1485 Las Palmas became the seat of the archipelago's bishopric, transferred from the Rubicon in Lanzarote, and the building of the Cathedral was begun. Sugarcane was imported from Madeira, and vines and other crops were introduced, all with nearly instant success thanks to the fertile volcanic soil and ideal climate. Soon the merchants and traders were hastening to Las Palmas to do business with the colonists, and pirates too, attracted by the booty in the town and in the caravels returning laden from across the Atlantic. By 1515, Las Palmas was officially recognized as a city, its wealth founded on the export of sugar, and the port's importance was such that a *Capitán General* or military governor was appointed to supervise the construction of defensive fortifications against maritime raids, which persisted with painful regularity throughout the 16th and 17th centuries.

With the 1778 laws promulgating freedom of trade between the Canaries and the Indies, Las Palmas enjoyed a fresh burst of prosperity, only partially dented by the 1823 decree creating Santa Cruz de Tenerife as capital of the Canary Islands. The inhabitants of Gran Canaria bitterly resented the honour going to Tenerife – after all, Santa Cruz de Tenerife was (and still is) a much smaller port. Numerous *Canarios* lobbied for a revision of the decree, among them Don Fernando León y Castillo and Nicolás Estévanez y Murphy whose names adorn so many streets. Then in 1912 they achieved partial sucess when a law which only came into effect in 1927 established Las Palmas as capital of the eastern province (Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura and Lanzarote), and Santa Cruz as capital of the western islands.

Today. Gran Canaria today is, with Tenerife, the most populous (600,000 inhabitants) and developed of the Canary Islands, led by the busy port of Las Palmas, the archipelago's industrial centre with an oil refinery, chemical, textile and tobacco factories. Despite the chronic water shortage, agriculture too makes a considerable contribution to the economy – tomatoes are grown for export, mainly around the south and east, bananas in the more fertile north – and Gran Canaria has easily the largest livestock population in the islands, almost as many head of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs as all the other islands put together.

It's also a tourist island par excellence, with hotels and other facilities concentrated in Las Palmas itself and in the southern resorts around Maspalomas. One of the Canaries' two international airports is here – Gando Airport, on the east coast – and thousands of visitors arrive in the cruise ships that have docked in Las Palmas for over a century. There is a good network of roads including the *autopista* (motorway) linking Las Palmas with the south. For accommodation in the island, see the chapter above on Where to Stay; for restaurants and nightlife, read on.

Restaurants in Gran Canaria. What follows is merely a small selection; the Tourist Office in Las Palmas can supply a much fuller list.

Las Palmas

Lord Nelson, Sagasta 43. First class, international cuisine.
La Guitarra, Dr Miguel Rosas 21.
Suizo, Sargento Llagas 1.
Tres Coronas, Sagasta 80. Oriental cuisine.
Casa Ramón, La Naval 1. Shellfish a speciality.
Bodegón del Pueblo Canario, Parque Doramas. Regional cuisine.
El Pote, José María Durán 47.
El Pollo Feliz, The Happy Chicken, Paseo de las Canteras 35.
Ikea, Joaquín Costa 43. Basque cooking.
Hermanos Rogelio, Valencia 16. Regional cuisine.
La Pizza, Tomás Miller 65. Italian.
House of Ming, Paseo de las Canteras 30. Chinese.
Montreal, 29 de Abril 77. Shellfish specialities.
Balalaica, Bernardo de la Torre 43. Russian.
Canario, Perojo 2. Regional cuisine.

Playa de San Agustín

Chez Mario, Morro Besudo. First-class, Italian food.
San Agustín Beach Club.
Sancho Panza, Morro Besudo.
Henry's Rotisserie.
Rodeo Grill, Rocas Rojas.
Pampa Linda, Puerto Chico.
Pizzeria Roma.

Playa del Inglés

Koka.
Las Arenas.

La Sandía (closed Tuesdays).
Gofio.
Lasenda El Alamo, Carretera de Monte León.
Las Cubas, Urbanización San Fernando.
Don Quijote, Oasis.
Mercurio, Carretera El Faro Km 57 (closed Sunday).

Mogán

La Riviera, Playa del Cura.
Fortaleza, San José, s/n.
Gonzalez, San José s/n.
Castilla, Arguineguín.
Canario de Oro, San Antonio 7.
Capitan Morgan, Plaza 1.

Nightlife in Gran Canaria. Las Palmas is *the* place for nightlife, but the south coast resorts have enough to keep holidaymakers from pining for home.

Las Palmas

Altavista, Cuidad Jardín Alta (open November-April).
Lido, Pelayo 16.
Molino Rojo, Secretario Artiles 87.
Copacabana, Bernardo de la Torre 88.
Topacio, Nicolás Estévanez 29.
Jivaro, Nicolas Estévanez 32.
El Bombin/The Bowler Hat, Gran Bassas 39.
Britania, Pelayo 14.
Pinito del Oro, Portugal 30.
Aloha, Blasco Ibáñez 57.
Acapulco, Ferreras 12.
La Carioca, Joaquín Costa 63.
Ciro, General Primo de Rivera 56.
Jacaranda, Ripoche 4.
Play Boy, Torres Quevedo 17.
Saxa Club, Sagasta 3.
Whisky Club, Bernardo de la Torre 87.
Fifty Fifty, Emilio Zola 20.

In the South

Apolo (in Hotel Apolo), Playa del Inglés.
La Torre (Hotel Rey Carlos), Playa del Inglés.
Tropical Club (Hotel Parque Tropical), Playa del Inglés.
Pigalle Club (Hotel Parque Tropical), Playa del Inglés.
Revolution (Hotel Buenaventura Playa), Playa del Inglés.
Sirocco (Hotel Catalina Playa), Playa del Inglés.
Lido, Playa del Inglés.
Vip's, Edificio Koka, Avenida Tenerife, Playa del Inglés.
Joy, Edificio Las Olas, Avenida Gran Canaria, Playa del Inglés.
La Gruta (Hotel Costa Canaria), San Agustín.
Beach Club, Plaza los Cocoteros, San Agustín.
La Rotunda, Playa de San Agustín.
Monte del Moro, Playa de San Agustín.
Hawk Club, Puerto Rico.
Capricho, Edificio Nueva Europa, Playa del Aguila.
Beverly Park (Hotel Beverly Park), Playa de las Burras.

Festivals in Gran Canaria

5 January: *Cabalgata de los Reyes Magos*, 'Procession of the Magi' (Las Palmas, Agüimes, Teror and Galdar).
20 January: Festival of Almond Blossom (Tejeda and Valsequillo).
February: *Carnaval* (Las Palmas, Telde, Agüimes).
February: *Fiestas Turísticas de Invierno* – specially for the tourist! (San Agustín, Playa del Inglés and Maspalomas).
March/April: *Semana Santa*, Holy Week (special ceremonies in Las Palmas and Telde).
29 April: Festival to celebrate anniversary of the 'Incorporation of Gran Canaria into the Kingdom of Castille' (Las Palmas).
May: *Fiesta de San Isidro* (Gáldar, Teror, San Nicolás de Tolentino, Montaña Cardones).
May/June: Corpus Christi (flower carpets in Las Palmas, Arucas).
24 June: Fiesta to celebrate anniversary of foundation of Las Palmas (also local festivals in Telde and Arucas).
6 July: *Fiesta de San Isidro* (Teror) and *Fiesta del Albaricoque*/Feast of the Apricot (Fataga).
16 July: *Fiestas del Carmen*, patroness of mariners (Puerto de la Luz in Las Palmas, also in Gáldar, San Nicolás de Tolentino).
25 July: Feast of St James the Apostle (Gáldar, San Bartolomé de Tirajana).
4 August: *La Bajada de la Rama* (Agaete); this fiesta has been declared

rs—'of special interest to tourists', with processions and displays of folklore in the streets, as part of the celebrations to honour the Virgin of the Snows.

15 August: Festival to honour San Roque, patron saint of Guía (also in Firgas, Telde and Las Palmas).

August (last Sunday): *Fiesta de la Virgen de la Cuevita* (Artenara).

8 September: *Fiesta de la Virgen del Pino;* this is a very special day celebrated all over the islands, as the Virgin of the Pine is patroness of all the Canaries.

10 September: *Fiesta de San Nicolás* (San Nicolás de Tolentina) and *Bajada del Cristo* (Telde), the latter honouring the Mexican image of Christ made of maize.

October (first Sunday): *Fiesta de la Naval* (Las Palmas, Santa Brígida), celebrating the 1595 victory over Sir Francis Drake.

November: *Rancho de Animas* (Teror), a good chance to see displays of local folk music and dancing.

8 December: *Fiesta de la Caña Dulce* (Jinamar), to honour the sugarcane.

13 December: *Fiesta de Santa Lucía* (Arucas, Gáldar, Santa Lucía de Tirajana); and the following Sunday: *Fiesta de los Labradores* – 'of the workers' – a mixture of piety and folklore.

25 December: *Navidades*, or Christmas, celebrated everywhere.

31 December: *Nochevieja*, New Year's Eve, with fireworks from Playa de las Canteras (Las Palmas).

Las Palmas

This large colourful city (population 350,000) is a combination of ancient and modern, port and resort, business and pleasure: there is nowhere like it. Visitors arriving in the cruise ships or in the hydrofoil from Tenerife are immediately enveloped by the sights and sounds and scents of a busy commercial and shipping centre that is also a major holiday spot, with offices and hotels cheek by jowl and tourists happily ambling through purposeful streams of workers. Most of the modern hotels, restaurants, nightclubs and specifically tourist amenities are situated in the north, between the port and the long beach of Playa de las Canteras, along the isthmus of La Isleta, while the old part of the town huddles in a picturesque quarter some four miles to the south, on the banks of the Guiniguada ravine (now hidden beneath a modern highway).

Las Palmas (North)
LA BARRA
CANTERAS
PLAYA
DE LAS
Paseo
de Las
Canteras
Avenida
Calle Juan Rejón
PUERTO
DE LA LUZ
Fishing Quay
Luis Morote
Muelle Sta Catalina
hydrofoil dock
Nicolás Estévanez
General P de Rivera
Fernando Guanarteme
Avenida Mesa y Lopez
NAVAL BASE
Club Náutico
PLAYA DE LAS ALCARAVANERAS
Paseo de Chil
Calle Cano
Calle Alcalde Ramírez Bethencourt
Calle Doctor Chil
Avenida Marítima
to Ciudad
to Arucas
to Arucas
Las Palmas (North): Key
1 Casino de la Luz
2 Parque Sta Catalina
3 Tourist Office
4 English Church
5 Plaza de la Victoria
6 Plaza Jose Antonio
7 Plaza Julio Antonio
8 Parque Doramas

Since the city is primarily a port – the busiest in Spain – that's where we'll start the tour. Two long quays stretch south from **La Isleta,** the arid hilly peninsular on the north-east tip of the island (a military base, not open to the public), serving as docks for the oil tankers and cargo ships and protecting **Puerto de la Luz,** the old port and fishing harbour, as well as Muelle Santa Catalina where the hydrofoil docks and the Naval Base just to the south. Beneath the feet of La Isleta are the huge oil tanks of the CEPSA refinery, shining silver in the sun. Almost next door is the **Castillo de la Luz,** oldest historic monument in Las Palmas; originally built in 1494, it was reconstructed in the late 16th century and has recently been restored. From here a short walk along Calle Juan Rejón takes you across the narrow neck of the isthmus to the east end of **Playa de las Canteras,** a 1½-mile-long beach of golden sand sheltered by the natural breakwater reef of La Barra. A long promenade follows the beach west, Paseo de Las Canteras, thronging with semi-naked holidaymakers spilling out of the numerous hotels, restaurants, cafés and bars overlooking the beach – for this is the 'tourist quarter' of town. Then, if you've had your fill of sand and swimming, you'll probably head for the large square of **Parque Santa Catalina,** more a plaza than a park, with fast traffic racing through in all directions. Beneath the trees, among flowerbeds and birds and butterflies, there are open-air cafés and bars where you can sit and watch the stallholders – African, Oriental or local – selling everything from tat to antiques; portrait painters and *limpiabotas* (bootblacks) at work, almond-sellers, chessplayers . . . and of course tourists. The **Tourist Office** is to one side of the square, in an attractive modern building designed by Néstor de la Torre (more of whom below).

From here it's a long walk to the old quarter, and most people take a taxi unless they're making for one of the attractions en route, such as the **Club Náutica** or the neighbouring beach, **Playa de las Alcaravaneras.** The old quarter or Vegueta as it's known is south of the **Barranco de Guiniguada** (now buried under a modern motorway), where Juan Rejón and his men made their first encampment in Gran Canaria. It's a warren of narrow cobbled streets and old mansions, with most of the city's historic monuments. In Plaza de Santa Ana facing the Ayuntamiento (Town Hall) is the **Catedral de Santa Ana,** dating from the late 15th century. The present building was in fact begun in the late 18th century, but numerous delays meant that it was not completed till the 19th century. Considering that so many different architects had a finger in it, the building creates an impression of harmony; the *Canarios* are immensely proud of it. The rather heavy neoclassical facade hides a spacious predominantly gothic interior, containing numerous treasures

Las Palmas
(South)
Las Palmas (South) Key
1 Pueblo Canario
2 Plaza Tomás Morales
3 Plaza León y Castillo
4 Parque San Telmo
5 Ermita San Telmo
6 Post Office
7 Plaza de Colón
8 Theatre
9 Cathedral
10 Plaza Santa Ana
11 Town Hall
12 Museum Canario
13 Casa de Colón
14 San Antonio Abad
15 Market
(Carretera del Centro)
to Tafira
Barranco Guiniguada
Calle Cuartillo
Calle Colón
Avenida Generalísimo Franco
Geo. B. Pérez Galdós
Cano
Calle Mayor de Triana
Avenida Rafael Cabrera
Avenida Marítima
to Airport and Maspalomas
Bravo Murillo
Paseo de Chil
Paseo Tomás Morales
Calle León y Castillo
Parque Doramas
Avenida Marítima
N

some of which are said to have come from St Paul's Cathedral, London, when Cromwell was dismantling our churches.

Across the road from the Cathedral is **Plaza de Santa Ana**, a narrow paved square lined by palm trees and bronze statues of huge dogs, recalling the wild dogs that once roamed the Canaries and gave the islands their name. To the left as you face the Cathedral is the **Palacio Episcopal** (Bishop's Palace), once commandeered by a cheeky pirate who had sacked the city, and behind you is the impressive Town Hall. Just up behind the Town Hall is a smaller triangular plaza, **Plaza Espíritu Santo**, with a tiny 16th century chapel that provides a focus for the Corpus Christi celebrations in June, when the streets of the Vegueta are filled with flower carpets and processions.

The nearby **Museu Canario**, on the corner of Calle Dr Chil and Calle Dr Verneau, is well worth a visit (open 10 am to 1 pm and 3 - 8 pm, mornings only on Sundays and holidays; admission 50 pesetas). An excellent catalogue (75 pesetas) with a brief section in English explains the purpose of the museum: to display and promote the islands' past, from fossils to Guanche mummies and ceramics. Some of the most interesting exhibits are the volcanic stones and *bombas*, lumps of solidified lava hurled out of the volcano mouth, shaped like twisted candies. Turning left off Calle Dr Chil behind the Cathedral into Plaza del Pilar Nuevo, you come to the **Casa Museu de Colón** in Calle Colón, a very handsome old mansion that was once the residence of the governors of Gran Canaria and which Columbus stayed in during his various visits here. It now houses a museum to Columbus and the days of the Conquest – both of the New World and of the Canaries (open Monday to Saturday, 9.30 am to 2 pm). Now restored to its former glory, the building itself it as interesting as any of its contents; the exterior is a very attractive mixture of gothic and typical local architecture, and inside there is a pretty galleried patio with an old well in the middle, surrounded by screeching parrots. You can just picture Columbus dashing across the courtyard to Mass at the little church of **San Antonia Abad** nearby, praying to the image of Santa Ana that is now in the museum to give him good winds for his voyage. The present church only dates from 1892, built on the site of the church where Columbus prayed, but it's still a picturesque corner, with a burst of purple bougainvillea spilling over the church roof.

Down towards the waterfront, through a maze of narrow streets, is the **Mercado de Las Palmas**, the city's principal market. Now, taking you life in your hands, cross the broad and busy highway that was built over the Barranco de Guiniguada, and you're into Triana, another old quarter full of interesting sights. The first building you'll notice beside the

highway is **Teatro Pérez Galdós**, the Las Palmas theatre/opera house, designed by the architect brother of Néstor de la Torre and with Néstor's own work decorating the handsome foyer – paintings of Canary island flora and fruits. The theatre is named after Benito Pérez Galdós, the famous Spanish novelist (1843-1920) who came from Las Palmas; you can visit the house in which he was born and where he lived for many years in nearby Calle Cano, it's now a museum to his memory (at No. 33; open Monday to Saturday, 9 am - 1 pm). **Calle Mayor de Triana** running through the heart of this quarter is Las Palmas' main shopping centre. Due north along this street is the large dusty square called **Parque de San Telmo** containing a little chapel, **Ermita de San Telmo** (late 17th century), dedicated to the patron saint of fishermen and mariners.

About one mile north along **Calle León y Castillo** is the green oasis of the city, **Parque Doramas**, surrounding the luxurious Hotel Santa Catalina. Besides the lush vegetation including dragon trees and other native specimens the park contains a small zoo, public swimming pool and tennis courts and the **Pueblo Canario**. This model Canary village is a monument to the memory of Néstor de la Torre (1888-1938), Las Palmas' favourite son. He was an artist and designer who did much to preserve and promote Canary Island architecture and culture; a small museum in the 'village', **Museu Néstor**, contains memorabilia pertaining to his life and work. The Pueblo Canario itself is a delightful recreation of typical Canary Island buildings and craft shops surrounding a little plaza where regular displays of folkdancing take place. To one side of the plaza is the **Ermita de Santa Catalina**, dedicated to the patron saint of Mallorca, in the Balearic Islands; it was built by Mallorquin friars in the 15th century, one of the first in the island.

Still following Calle León y Castillo, you now enter the wealthy residential quarter of Ciudad Jardín, or Garden City, full of big houses and pretty gardens that can hardly contain their flamboyant displays. And finally the street ends at Parque Santa Catalina in the tourist district – back where we started.

Around the North and West

There are some marvellous excursions to be made around the more populous, more fertile north of Gran Canaria. In the heart of banana country about 10 miles from Las Palmas stands **Arucas**, the island's third largest town, on a wide plain stretching between two *barrancos* and dominated by Montaña de Arucas. At the top of this old volcanic cone –

none of Gran Canaria's volcanoes have been active for some 200 years – there is a *mirador* giving marvellous views over the town, the coast and the eastern countryside towards Las Palmas. Arucas has many fine old houses and gardens dating from the early colonial days and an imposing neo-gothic 'Cathedral' (built 1909), more prosaically called the *Iglesia Parroquial de San Juan Bautista*, and a lovely municipal park full of native plants and trees. Besides the bananas, Arucas still grows sugarcane, the sugar being distilled into *ron* (rum) in the town's factories. A few miles west along the C.814 there's a left fork up to **Firgas**, famous for its mineral water sold throughout the archipelago (the actual springs and bottling plant are about 4 miles up the *barranco*).

Moya, next town along the C.814 is perched on the very edge of another deep *barranco*, apparently ready to nosedive into the ravine. Apart from its dramatic situation, Moya is famous as the ancient stronghold of Doramas, last king of the Guanches, and as the birthplace of Tomás Morales, the poet (1885-1921). Moya's church (20th century) is built on the site of an early 16th-century chapel; its dominant towers and the town's precarious position can best be viewed from the road below.

Continuing west along this twisty inland route the road passes through **Los Tilos** (the Laurels), remains of the ancient 'Forest of Doramas', and then descends towards the coast near Guía. An alternative faster route from Las Palmas to Guía follows the coastline, with beautiful views of the cliffs and rocky coves around Bañadero. Just before Guía this wide modern highway sweeps past the **Cenobio de Valerón**, one of the most interesting archaeological sites in the islands, a cliff face pitted with hundreds of caves. Popularly thought to have been a sort of convent where Guanche maidens worshipped a divinity called Alcorac, each of them inhabiting one cave or 'cell', a more authoritative explanation is that the caves were used for storing grain but the two theories are not incompatible; it's possible that the larger caves were inhabited by the 'nuns' and the small ones used as silos. During the Spanish invasion the cliff face became a Guanche refuge and look-out post, giving excellent views over the surrounding country.

Guía – or Santa María de Guía, to give it its full name – is another agricultural centre, amid banana plantations and vineyards. It's an attractive small town, famous for its *queso de flor* ('flower cheese'), made with sheep's milk and *thistle* flowers, of all things. The neighbouring and much larger town of Gáldar used to be capital of a Guanche kingdom, ruled over by the unfortunate Tenesor Semidán/Fernando Guanarteme (see above). There are many Guanche sites round here, including the nearby **Cueva Pintada** on the road to Agaete, the 'Painted Cave' whose

walls are decorated with geometric designs in several colours (open to the public for a small admission fee). Another local site is the 'necropolis' on the coast near La Guancha, a series of blocked up caves and circular stone mounds where Guanche nobles were buried. In Gáldar itself further Guanche relics are preserved in the *Ayuntamiento* (Town Hall), opposite the church on the Plaza Mayor. In passing, notice the dragon tree in front of the Town Hall; it's thought to be over several thousand years old, one of the few native specimens in this island.

From Gáldar, a right fork leads down to the coast at **Sardina del Norte**, a little port with a sandy beach. Some 6 miles south is the beautiful landscape around **Agaete**, a small town nestling beneath tall rocky hillsides amid some of the most fertile country in Gran Canaria, growing bananas, coffee and a profusion of semitropical plants and fruit. Agaete was where Alonso de Lugo raised a fortress (now no longer existing) and helped Pedro de Vera defeat the Guanches. Agaete's hermitage, *Ermita de las Nieves*, houses one of the island's greatest treasures, a beautiful 16th-century Flemish triptych showing *La Virgen de las Nieves*, Virgin of the Snows. Every August, *La Bajada de la Rama* (Descent of the Bough) is celebrated in Agaete and the nearby port of Puerto de las Nieves, a combination of ancient pagan fertility rites, religious ceremonies, processions and folk music – it's considered one of the fiestas of particular *interés turístico*. At the top of the valley above Agaete is a one-time spa, **Los Berrazales**, where the ferrous water was bathed in and sipped by rheumaticky visitors; though the *balneario* is now closed, the valley is still worth a visit for the glorious views down towards Agaete and south to the beautiful pine forest of **Pinar de Tamadaba**. Below Agaete on the coast is the little fishing village of **Puerto de las Nieves**, Port of the Snows, which supposedly acquired its name from the view across to Tenerife's Mount Teide, snow-covered for much of the year. There's good swimming to be had here, off the shingly beach, and excellent fishing; taste the fresh-caught fish in one of the village's *restaurantes tipicos*. Along the coast nearby is the curious rock formation called *El Dedo de Dios* (Finger of God), pointing heavenwards from beneath steep cliffs.

Leaving Agaete, a long stretch of winding road follows the steep western coastline to **San Nicolás de Tolentina**, formerly known as La Aldea ('The Village'), a small town and tomato-growing area near the mouth of Barranco de la Aldea, the deep ravine leading out of the central mountains. Once utterly isolated from the rest of the island, San Nicolás is less inaccessible now, but still fails to make the average tourist itinerary. A narrow and very twisty road through San Nicolás covers nearly 20 miles to Mogán in the south (see below).

The Mountains

From Las Palmas, an excellent road heads southwest for 3 miles to **Tamaraceite** (where you can branch off to Arucas: see above), little more than a residential suburb to the city. Now following the C.817 into the hills, the next place you come to is **Teror.** This charming small town full of attractive old houses featuring the typical wooden balconies and central patios is situated among some of the greenest and most beautiful countryside in the island. The characteristic tranquillity is disturbed every September by the pilgrimage and feast in honour of Our Lady of the Pine (*La Virgen del Pino*), patroness of the island, whose image is kept in Teror's Basilica. She gets her name from the pine tree in which the Virgin Mary is said to have made an appearance, and the present Basilica, dating from 1767, stands on the site of an earlier church built to celebrate this miracle. Sumptuously dressed and bejewelled – in the 1970s her gems were the target of a daring robbery, when thieves broke in through the roof – and surrounded by seminaked cherubs bearing incense bowls, the image is thought to be of the Sevillan school (15th century), and the ornate silver stand is the work of an 18th-century Tenerifan silversmith.

Above Teror the road climbs rapidly into the mountains to a wonerful viewpoint at **Balcón de Zamaro,** looking down over the town. A short distance further on is the picturesque village of **Valleseco**, almost at the summit, then you join the 'scenic route' – as if the road through Teror isn't beautiful enough – around La Cumbre, the summit. A right turn takes you to several marvellous viewpoints, and west as far as the Tamadaba pine forest (see above) via **Artenara**, highest village in the island at 4,000 ft, where the locals still live in caves – but caves with all mod cons. A left turn leads to **Cruz de Tejeda**, 4,760 ft above sea level. Here is the island's *Parador Nacional*, an attractive state run hotel and busy restaurant, designed by Néstor de la Torre. From the hotel terrace there are superb views of the mountain range, which the Spanish novelist Unamuno described as 'a petrified tempest'. Among the bizarre natrual formations standing out against the skyline is **Roque Nublo** (Cloudy Rock) once held sacred by the Guanches, and another even more venerable rock, **Roque Bentayga.** Below the bare peaks the slopes are covered in stunted pine trees descending gradually towards the west coast; and looking west on a clear day, you can see the majestic and unmistakable peak of Mount Teide in Tenerife, 62 miles away. The nearby village of **Tejeda** itself, over 3,000 ft above sea level, lies in a dip

between the ridges, surrounded by almond trees and orchards, an enchanting sight in spring when the blossoms are full.

Heading south across the ridge, around Roque Nublo, the road leads almost to the top of **Pico** (or **Pozo**) **de las Nieves**, highest point in Gran Canaria at 6,398 ft, with yet more superlative views. **Pozo** means 'well', apparently referring to the melting snow that seldom settles here, unlike on Mount Teide. From there the road continues south towards San Bartolomé (see below), but meanwhile we'll return to Las Palmas via the C.811 and **San Mateo**. This upland village amid high pastures and agricultural land has a popular tourist attraction in *Casa de Cho Zacarias*, an old farmhouse turned into a sort of rural museum, displaying typical Canary Island furniture and farm implements, with a *bodegón* where visitors can taste the local *vino*. There's a crossroads here which branches off to Teror in the north and Telde in the east (see below), but the C.811 pursues its way down through green and lovely landscapes towards **Santa Brígida, Monte Coello** and **Tafira** – all of them favourite summer holiday resorts away from the heat of the city. Monte Coello, or Monte for short, is the island's most celebrated wine producing region; *vino tinto del Monte* is drunk all over the archipelago. The scenery round here is gentler, all rolling green hills with cultivated terraces and palm trees, but a right turn off the C.811 leads to a much more dramatic sight: **La Caldera de Bandama.** Just over 2,000 ft above sea level, this volcanic crater is utterly unlike the higher-altitude crater of Las Cañadas in Tenerife; it's a peaceful green bowl 650 ft deep, over half a mile wide, with a lonely but tranquil farmhouse on the fertile crater floor. Nearby is the *Campo de Golf*, Las Palmas' golf course, the clubhouse not far from the crater's rim. Towards Tafira there's a left turn to **Jardín Canario**, a botanical garden created on the edge of a steep *barranco*, displaying a fine collection of the native flora (open daily, 10 am - 12 noon and 3 - 6 pm; small admission fee). From here it's a mere 5 miles down the Carretera del Centro into Las Palmas.

The East Coast

The *autopista* or motorway heads south from Las Palmas, bypassing some of Gran Canaria's most typical small towns and villages. On the coast immediately south of the city stands the **Castillo de San Cristóbal**, a 16th century fortress built to ward off pirates and other unwanted visitors. A few miles on, you can leave the motorway to visit **Jinámar** in a desolate volcanic landscape of solidified lava streams and the *picón* (volcanic ash) that is collected and used to absorb moisture from nightly

precipitations and thus to water the precious roots. And, characteristic of such arid country, the only vegetation round here is the candelabra-shaped *cardón* and the *tabaiba*, both belonging to the Euphorbia species. Through several industrial complexes, the next town is **Telde**, in an area where banana warehouses alternate with factories and holiday apartments. Telde used to be capital of a Guanche kingdom, and has abundant reminders of their one-time presence as well as Spanish colonial mansions and pretty squares. Telde's church, *Iglesia de San Juan Bautista*, dates from the early 16th century, with modern additions such as the towers; the presbytery is the oldest part. In the church is an extraordinary image of Christ made of crushed maize mixed with water into a kind of papier mâché; it was the work of Mexican Indians and was brought to Telde in the late 16th century by triumphant Spanish conquistadores returned from the New World. And one can hardly fail to notice the magnificent gilded Flemish reredos, one of the island's most valuable treasures, dating from the 15th century; six scenes depicting the Nativity include some very odd features such as a cameo of St Simeon wearing spectacles. The old part of Telde, Barrio de San Francisco – called after the 16th-century church of that name – is one of the oldest colonial sites of Gran Canaria, full of simple stone houses originally inhabited by the first settlers in the island.

Beyond Telde, the mountain road climbs towards San Mateo (see above), while a road down to the coast visits **Los Llanos** where sugarcane plantations were once worked by Guanche and Moorish slaves; now it's part of Telde's industrial area. About 3 miles south of Telde are the old Guanche caves of **Cuatro Puertas** (Four Doors). The four openings lead into a large central cavern inside the hill, thought to have been a sort of council chamber where Guanche leaders assembled to discuss law and order and matters of religious significance. Smaller caves were used for drying out corpses during the primitive mummification process, and the hill itself was regarded by the Guanches as a specially sacred place. Directly below Cuatro Puertas is **Gando Airport** on the coast, next door to a military airfield. It's ideally situated both for Las Palmas and for the tourist resorts in the south, with an excellent modern road linking them up. Heading south again, 5 miles from Cuatro Puertas is **Ingenio**, another typical old colonial town, fomerly a major sugarcane area; the name *Ingenio* means Sugarmill. It's now a local crafts centre, famous for its embroidery.

Agüimes, next town south from Ingenio, used to be the feudal estate of Canary Island bishops; now it's the site of a satellite-tracking station. Near Agüimes in the Barranco de Balos is another very important archaeological site, **Lomo de los Letreros**, with designs and inscriptions

dating from different periods. Some of the designs clearly represent animals and plants, some are like stylized human figures, and there are hieroglyphics like those in Hierro, but there are none of the curious spiral patterns found in La Palma. This is odd, since Gran Canaria otherwise possesses so many different manifestations of Guanche art; the obvious inference is that more than one culture was responsible for the various designs, but the theorists have so far been unable to agree on who or when or why. So much yet remains to be done in the way of investigating prehistoric cultures in the Canary Islands, and for the moment neither the skill nor the funds are available; but one day perhaps we'll hear that the archipelago was indeed once inhabited by the people of Atlantis...

Above Agüimes, a road climbs towards the mountain peaks to **Santa Lucía**, amid glorious scenery, with a small archaeological museum, then to **San Bartolomé de Tirajana**, situated at the foot of the crags; from here it's a steep ascent to Roque Nublo and Cruz de Tejeda (see above). Far below is the old port of Agüimes, and **Arinaga**, an attractive little place with fine views along the coastline. All round are tomato 'plantations', acres of cane supporting the plants; harvested between November and May, their juicy red fruits are exported to make cheerful displays in British greengrocers' shops in winter.

The South

About 16 miles south of the airport and 30 miles south of Las Palmas begins the tourist sprawl of **San Agustín, Playa del Inglés** and **Maspalomas**, all running into each other. This is the land of leisure and pleasure: sunshine, sea and sand in equal proportions, with everything a holidaymaker's heart desires. The landscape here is in total contrast to the north of Gran Canaria; approaching the resorts there seems to be nothing but crumbling yellow rock and sand, but then the palm trees and high-rise hotels appear on the horizon, like a mirage in the desert. Only 15 years ago Maspalomas was a rather isolated little fishing village, frequented by outsiders only in summer; the sand dunes were dotted with beach tents and the only high-rise monument then was the lighthouse. That was before the tourist boom. Slowly it dawned on people that the climate here was as magnificent in winter as in summer, and gradually more and more foreigners wanted to hibernate in Maspalomas. So the hotels sprang up, and restaurants and cafés and bars and nightclubs and shops... and it's still spreading. Playa del Inglés was merely an extension of the same idea, pure resort, and San Agustin too

began as a commercial glint in a Swedish development company's eye. With their excellent modern amenities plus beautiful unpolluted white beaches, splendid swimming, fishing, waterskiing etc, all three places have now become a paradise for hedonists.

Maspalomas has given its name to the sand dunes around the southernmost point of the island, **Punta de Maspalomas**. *Maspalomas* means 'More Pigeons' but everyone cracks the old cliché about how it should be renamed *Masturistas* – 'More Tourists'. Those sand dunes are magnificent, all one hundred acres of them, like a mini-Sahara Desert, sculpted by the wind into an abstract design of waves and ripples. The sight is almost too much to behold, gleaming gold against the aquamarine sea, with shining white hotels behind. And, just to complete the illusion, there's a large lagoon surrounded by palm trees round which the old village was built; this natural oasis now provides calm waters for boating and swimming for those who get tired of the rough Atlantic.

West of Maspalomas the road continues along the coast past more developing *urbanizaciones* and the excellent watersports centre of **Pasito Blanco,** to **Arguineguín,** a great place for fans of big game fishing – tuna and swordfish in particular – and probably features in thousands of holiday snapshots showing The One That Didn't Get Away. Then about 5 miles on you come to **Puerto Rico**, another burgeoning tourist resort with a small beach and a growing marina full of yachts and windsurfers and motorboats towing waterskiers.

At **Puerto de Mogán,** just a few miles on, the road abruptly turns its back on the coast and heads north up the steep *barranco* to **Mogán** itself. This village is nothing special in itself, just a typically picturesque small community, but it is a popular excursion from the southern resorts because of the glorious fertile landscape and lovely views down the valley. At an altitude of over 2,000 ft, the air is cooler and fresher, a pleasant change after the hectic holiday atmosphere in the coastal towns. Beyond Mogán a rather poor road snakes across the hills and valleys to San Nicolás in the west (see above).

12 Fuerteventura

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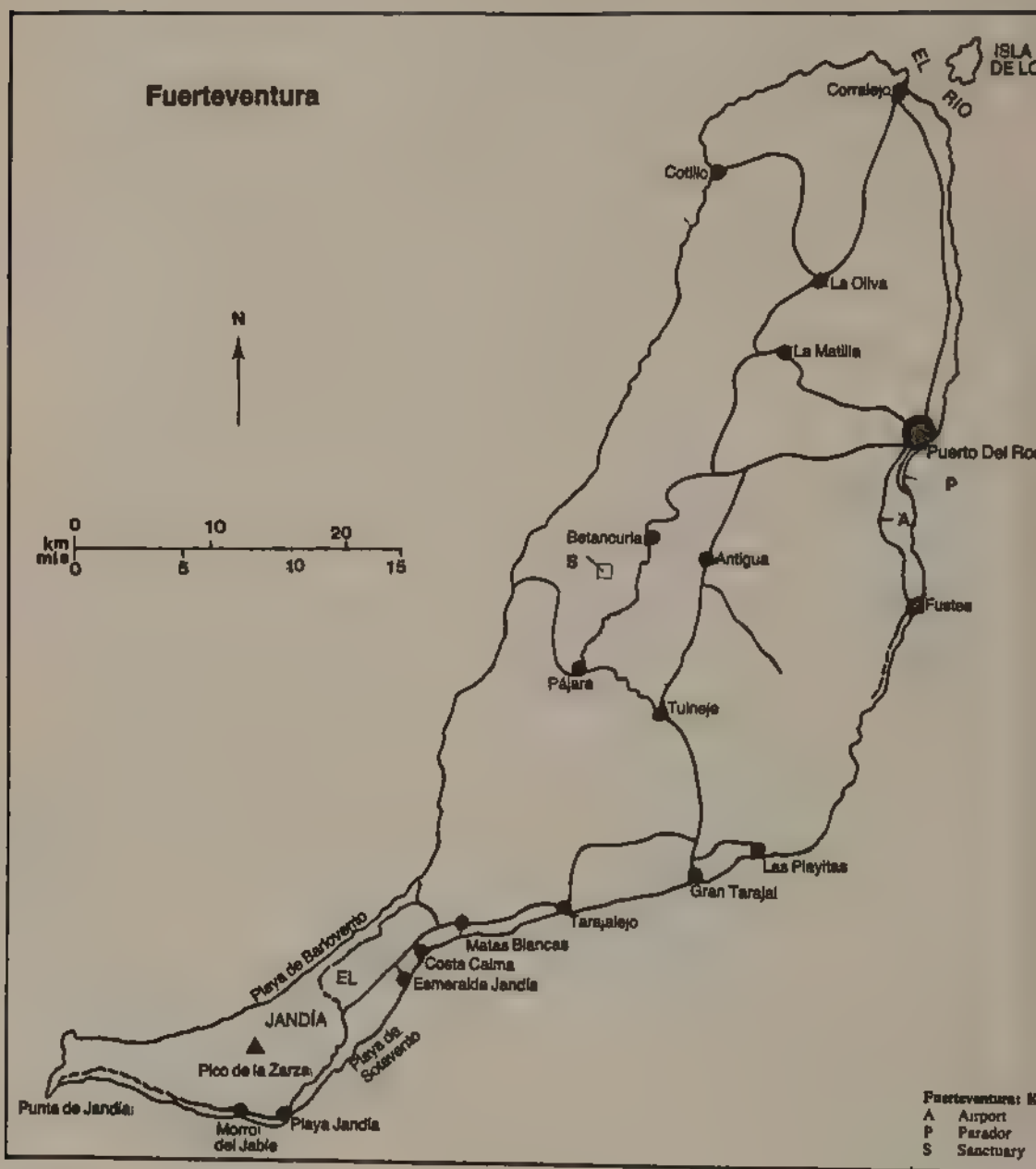
Less than 60 miles off the African coast, Fuerteventura is like a floating splinter that has flaked off the neighbouring continent. Seen from a distance the island presents a rather drab appearance, seemingly barren and bare, with reddish hills and plains and a relative lack of vegetation. But the climate is not much more extreme than in any of the Canary Islands, thanks to the cooling Atlantic breezes and ocean currents, and slowly, very slowly, tourists are beginning to make for Fuerteventura's delightful sandy beaches, the best in the archipelago. A sprinkling of modern hotels, villas and apartments has dotted the coastline, especially round Corralejos in the far north and along the southern peninsula of El Jandía. It's the emptiness and peace that people come for, not green landscapes or historical treasures or the heady sort of diversions that can be found in Tenerife and Gran Canaria.

At 665 square miles in area, Fuerteventura is the second largest of the Canaries after Tenerife, but with a total population of less than 25,000, of whom roughly half live in the capital, Puerto del Rosario. With an almost total lack of rainfall and virtually no subterranean water reserves, this sparsity of population is unsurprising, though recent efforts to solve the water problem – desalination plants, for example – are a source of hope for the future.

Fuerteventura's origins are still disputed; some authorities believe it was like Lanzarote once part of the African continent, while others maintain that is was the result of submarine volcanic activity like the rest of the archipelago. About 63 miles long by 19 miles wide at its widest point, the island's mountains reach a paltry height of 2,650 ft at Pico de la Zarza in the southern peninsula, while a ridge of low hills rises to the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Gran Tarajal
Tarajalejo
Matas Blancas
Costa Calma
Esmeralda Jandía
Playa de Barlovento
EL
JANDÍA
Pico de la Zarza
Playa de Sotavento
Punta de Jandía
Morro del Jable
Playa Jandía
Fuerteventura: A
A Airport
P Parador
S Sanctuary

west of centre, extending north-eastwards towards the solitary cone of Isla de Lobos, a small island off the north coast.

Apparently the landscape was relatively green and pleasant when King Juba II's expedition came nearly 2000 years ago, but centuries of over-grazing and mismanaged agricultural exploitation, combined with frequent droughts, have led to erosion and infertility. What natural vegetation still exists is thorny or poisonous or otherwise inedible to the goats that ate most of the rest, notably the Euphorbia species, the *cardón* and the *tabaiba* (respectively *E. canariensis* and *E. regis-jubae*, the latter named after King Juba: see Chapter 1), whose juice the Guanches extracted and used to stun fish. Apart from goats the island's animal population includes camels, imported long ago and now bred for work on the land or for the transportation of tourists, and *bardinos*, the local name for the domesticated descendants of the original wild dogs; it's said that four white paws identify those dogs with the purest blood of their wild ancestors.

History. Fuerteventura is marked on the first known map of the islands (1339) as 'La Forte Ventura', evidently so-named by the Genoese though apparently no one had laid claim to it. In 1402 the Frenchman Gadifer de la Salle arrived with a fellow countryman called Jean de Bethencourt. Gadifer set about pacifying the natives – here called Mahohs – and exploring both this island and Lanzarote, while Bethencourt was in Spain, supposedly collecting support and provisions for an all-out attempt to conquer the islands. When Bethencourt returned, he'd done the dirty on Gadifer; he had acquired sole rights and royal authority to call himself Lord of the Fortunate Isles. Gadifer sailed home to France and never returned.

Despite Bethencourt's claim to have conquered Fuerteventura – he shortly went on to Hierro and Gomera – the natives were far from subdued. Norman settlers who had arrived with Gadifer and Bethencourt were subjected to frequent attacks by the rebels; indeed the Mahohs nearly managed to recapture their island and in 1450 Diego de Herrera (son-in-law of Fernán Peraza: see chapter on Gomera) found a fierce battle on his hands when he arrived to proclaim his seignorial rights. However, the island was undoubtedly in Spanish hands well before Alonso de Lugo paid a visit here in 1501.

Throughout the centuries Fuerteventura suffered terrible raids by Algerian and Moroccan pirates amongst others, who sacked the early Norman and Spanish settlements and carried off many colonists and natives as slaves. In 1618, for example, they are reported to have seized over one thousand Fuerteventurans, and they even had the cheek to

establish their own Moorish communities on the island. Their influence is still visible in the local architecture; the low white-washed houses really look as though they belong to a North African landscape.

Because of the particularly ferocious maritime raids and the relative aridity of this island, Fuerteventura never possesed either the density of population or the prosperity of the other islands and even now remains a backward, under developed member of the archipelago. As the novelist and poet Unamuno wrote when he was exiled here: 'Fuerteventura, an oasis in the desert of civilizaion...'

Today. Half of the island's small population is occupied in the constant struggle to cultivate a dry volcanic soil, growing mainly cereals and tomatoes for export, or tending herds of goats, the only domestic animals capable of finding nourishment in this desert-like land. There has been an attempt to develop plantations of agaves for sisal, but with only limited success, and the past cultivation of opuntia cacti for the production of cochineal – the cochineal bug was introduced in 1825 – has dwindled to a very minor sideline. And, although there are excellent fishing grounds especially off the north coat round Isla de Lobos, Fuerteventura has but a tiny and antiquated fleet of fishing boats. Industry is unknown here, save for a few cement factories. As for tourism, it has only just reached the island, but already many of the islanders are quitting the unequal battle in the fields and entering the hotels and service industries started up as the result of foreign capital and enterprise, mostly German and Scandinavian. So far the local authorities have maintained a strict control over the building of hotels etc and the few developments are small-scale and pleasingly in tune with the landscape. Minor roads are often little more than sandy tracks, though a reasonable network of roads links the main centres. Until they are developed, and the water problem is resolved, this large island is likely to remain a backward, poverty-stricken place, depending too heavily on the foreign developers and tourists.

From the traveller's point of view, however, there is a unique pleasure in this state of affairs; the barren volcanic landscape is but a matter of curiosity, not concern, and poverty looks picturesque when it's not your own. And there are amenities enough to satisfy the trickle of holidaymakers who have found their way here, as indicated below in the lists of restaurants and nightclubs (for accommodation, see chapter on Where to Stay).

Restaurants in Fuerteventura

Puerto del Rosario
Espinel, Juan XXIII s/n.
La Goleta, Ciudad Jardín.
Las Gavias, Paseo Marítimo.
Sudamérica, León y Castillo 4.
Tinguaro, Avenida R. Gonzalez Negrín.
Pizzeria Playa Blanca, at Playa Blanca (2 or 3 miles south of town).
Café Madrid, at Playa Blanca (2 or 3 miles south of town).
Ciudad Jardín, General Linares.
Montreal, Almirante Lallemand s/n.
Café Paris, Comte Diaz Traiter.

Corralejo
Bahía Playa.
Cabra Loca.
La Calera.
Casa Juan.
Marquesina.
Sol y Playa.
Corralejo.
El Puertito, Isla de Lobos.

In the South
Club Mat, Jandía.
Charly, Carretera Km 22, Jándía.
Don Carlos, Playa Matorral.
Los Angeles,Carretera del Matorral Km 9.
Molino Azul, Tarajalejo.
Parada, General Franco 16, Tuineje.
Rodríguez, Morro Jable.
Roma, Gran Tarajal.
Sobrina, Las Playitas.
La Taberna, Costa Calma.
Taberna del Pescador, Carretera del Matorral.
Tony, Morro Jable.
Xaika, General Franco 4, Gran Tarajal.

Nightlife in Fuerteventura
All the large hotels and *urbanizaciones* have discos or nightclubs open to non residents. In Puerto del Rosario there is **Discoteca Taifa** in

Avenida José Antonio and **Scotch** at Playa Blanca; in Corralejo there are two discothèques, **Camelia** and **Freddy's** and at the **Lido** nightclub in Hotel Ybarra Tres Islas, some miles along the east coast.

Festivals in Fuerteventura

2 February: Celebrations to honour the Virgin of Candelaria in Tenerife (La Oliva).

14 July: *Fiesta del Patrón San Buenaventura* (Betancuria), celebrating the town's patron saint and simultaneously commemorating the incorporation of the island into the Kingdom of Castille.

16 July: *Fiesta de la Virgen del Carmen*, protector of fishermen and mariners (Corralejo).

September (third Saturday): *Fiesta de la Virgen de la Peña*, patroness of the island, with a typical *romería* in Vega del Rio Palma (Betancuria).

October (first week): *Fiestas de la Virgen de Rosario* (Puerto del Rosario).

Puerto del Rosario

The original capital of Fuerteventura was Betancuria, founded by Jean de Bethencourt. Now it is Puerto del Rosario on the east coast, formerly known as Puerto de Cabras (Port of Goats) until 1957 when the authorities decided such a name might be offputting to tourists. It's the main port of the island, visited by cruise ships and cargo vessels as well as the pathetically small fishing fleet, with a few *hostales* and restaurants to cater for visitors but with little else to distinguish it – no historic buildings, no glamour, just an air of having lost out somewhere. It is still bypassed by most of the tourists, who usually arrive at the large modern airport a few miles to the south and head straight for the modern developments in the far south or far north of the island. The state-run **Parador Nacional** is about 3 miles south of town on the coast beside the beach of Playa Blanca, and there's another good beach at **Fustes**, watched over by an 18th-century watchtower rather grandly called *El Castillo de Fustes*.

Around the Island

The old capital of Fuerteventura, **Betancuria**, lies 17 miles south-west of Puerto del Rosario in the hills. It's the oldest town in the island, founded in the 1500s by Bethencourt himself, after whom it was named. He had

already built himself a fortress called Richeroque somewhere down the west coast – there are no traces of it now – but in those days it was more sensible to live away from the coast, as far out of reach of pirates as possible. So this first settlement grew up in a shallow valley among the western hills.

Now just a village of 600 or so inhabitants, Betancuria still has its old monuments to proclaim its noble past. Bethencourt built the first church, but that was burnt down by Moorish pirates in 1593; the present church on the same site, *Iglesia Parroquial de Santa María* dates from the 17th century. Its architectural style shows a distinct Moorish influence in the high small windows and graceful belltower and the curious little balcony from which you half expect to hear the muezzin's cry. Inside the church is an image of Santa Catalina brought to Fuerteventura by the island's first French colonists, and some murals in the sacristy depicting the life of the Virgin; the sacristy also has a handsome *mudéjar* panelled ceiling. A hundred yards up the valley from the church stand the ruins of a Franciscan convent, *Convento de San Buenaventura*, founded in the 15th century. A Spanish law in 1820 suppressing such monasteries led to the abandonment and gradual dismantling of the convent but you can still see the outer walls and a few columns and arches, and a single gothic window. On the other side of the *barranco* is the recently restored *Ermita de San Diego de Alcalá*, a hermitage built over a cave where San Diego used to pray; he was the Spanish monk who had founded the convent.

Amid this grand old ghost town's dilapidated colonial mansions is a small *Museu Arqueológico*, with a collection of Mahoh artefacts and items pertaining to the conquest.

Another hermitage lies off the road leading to Pájara, along a footpath in the green valley of Barranco del Río Palma. This is the sanctuary of the island's patroness, *La Virgen de la Peña*. The little 15th-century alabaster image of Our Lady is much revered by the islanders, who pay their respects to her every September with a pilgrimage and celebrations in nearby Betancuria.

Now descending through the hills with some fine views down the west coast, the next town is **Pájara**, a municipal town and third in size after Puerto del Rosario. Quite the most interesting monument here is the church, dating from the mid 16th century, its carved stone portal featuring an odd but pleasing mixture of gothic and Aztec designs – presumably influenced by craftsmen who had returned from the New World.

The main road out of Pájara heads south to **Tuineje**, an attractive little town where the stone houses tend not to be whitewashed, unlike

most others in the archipelago. Despite being well inland, Tuineje suffered several attacks by Moorish and English pirates, who probably landed on the east coast at **Gran Tarajal**. Today, Gran Tarajal's port, in a good natural harbour, is second only to Puerto del Rosario, exporting the tomatoes that are grown in the locality, and there's a good beach here of fine blackish sand. Just to the north in another well sheltered bay is **Las Playitas**, a small but developing resort, focused as the name suggests on the *playas* (beaches).

All these little communities, however, are but minor diversions to most visitors, who make a beeline straight for the resorts on the southern peninsula of El Jandía. As straight, that is, as the roads permit; beyond Gran Tarajal and **Tarajalejo**, another small village along the coast with a growing influx of visitors, the nature of the road surface becomes progressively less reliable and more circuitous. But who's hurrying? The sunshine and sand will wait for everyone.

Some 6 miles from Tarajalejo at **Matas Blancas** the road starts to cross the narrow sandy neck of land that links **El Jandía** to the rest of the island: *Istmo de la Pared*, Isthmus of the Wall. The wall in question was apparently built near here to divide two Guanche kingdoms, Maxorata and Jandía; traces of it can still be found, but it was more of a boundary line than a Great Wall of China. From here and for the next few miles it's all sand, sand, sand, reflecting the glare of the sun while the road meanders through dunes past the small resorts of **Costa Calma** and **Esmeralda Jandía**. The name 'Costa Calma' gives a clue to why this side of the peninsula is favoured by developers and tourists: it is less windy. Almost unbroken stretches of white sand line both coasts of the peninsula, Playa de Barlovento in the north and Playa de Sotavento in the south, but it's in the lee of the wind that most of the villas and holiday complexes are situated: **El Esquinzo, Stella Maris** and **Playa Jandía** itself. In the middle rises the tallest mountain in Fuerteventura, **Pico de la Zarza**, also called Pico del Jandía, in a low ridge of reddish hills covered in thin scrub and cacti. The north of the peninsula is even less accessible by road, the beaches lying at the foot of steep crumbling sandstone cliffs eroded by wind and spray.

'Resorts' in this island means something quite different from Tenerife or Gran Canaria, for instance; the tourist complexes here are more like private holiday estates, attractively built and landscaped. In fact the whole peninsula of El Jandía used to belong to a German entrepreneur in the 1930s, who later sold it off in lots to real estate speculators and they in turn disposed of it to the developers. But the development is all very small scale, partly because of the authorities' firm intention to avoid over-exploitation and partly because of the chronic water problem. El

Jandia is a great place to get away from it all, with little to do except sunbathe, swim and maybe indulge in a little energetic windsurfing; fishing or sailing.

Now retracing our steps as far as Tuineje, there is an alternative (and better) route to the north via **La Antigua**. This small town is situated in the middle of the island's flat central plain, the most fertile and cultivated area, with only the distant hills and an occasional palm tree or windmill adorning the distant horizon. La Antigua is merely a scattering of low white houses with nothing to prompt the traveller to stop as he continues north and east to Puerto del Rosario. From the capital there is a coastal road north to Corralejo; though shorter than the inland route (18 miles, as opposed to 24) it's often impassable thanks to drifting sand. The main road from Puerto del Rosario passes round the flanks of **Montaña Quemada**, just beyond a small hamlet called La Matilla. Montaña Quemada is the site of a monument raised to the memory of Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936), the Spanish thinker and writer who was exiled to Fuerteventura for unacceptable political views and who sang the praises of the island's beauty and peace. About 5 miles north is the old town of **La Oliva**, amid acres of agave plantations, old windmills and herds of goats. La Oliva's church has the robust proportions of a fortress, with buttressed exterior walls and a solid square belltower of unadorned lava stone. Witness to past prosperity, there are several large old mansions in La Oliva: *La Casa de la Capellanía* has a fine stone portal decorated with more Aztec designs, and some way apart from the town stands *La Casa de los Coroneles*, looking like a royal palace built in the wrong place. It was in fact the home of Fuerteventura's military governors, built in the mid 18th century and considered one of the most remarkable examples of that period in the whole archipelago. Presently being restored, it is still a semi-ruin, but future visitors may be able to ascertain the truth of the story that it has 365 windows, one for each day of the year.

There is a minor road to the west of La Oliva leading to **Cotillo** on the coast. This small fishing village with good beaches nearby has so far remained undeveloped, but it's noted for its 17th-century *castillo* or watchtower, popularly called *La Torre de Rico Roque* after the now-lost fortress of Richeroque that Bethencourt constructed somewhere in the vicinity.

Heading north from La Oliva we finally come to **Corralejo**, on the north coast. Once just another small fishing village, Corralejo is fast turning into the island's principal resort. It faces north-east to the small island of Isla de Lobos across a narrow strait called El Río (The River). With its glorious golden beaches, sparkling clear water and lovely views

along the coastline, Corralejo's charms have a glossy tourist-brochure quality, though most of the holiday accommodation here is in the form of private villas and chalets. The grand exception is Hotel Ybarra Tres Islas, a few kilometres down the east coast, at the summit of conspicuous luxury with its freshwater swimming pool right beside the beach and the white-frilled ocean.

In Corralejo it's possible to hire a boat and make the 1½-mile crossing to **Isla de Lobos**, named after the *lobos marinos* (seals) which used to patronize this little island. Gadifer de la Salle was marooned here for a while when the crew on his ship mutinied during an expedition from Lanzarote; he survived by killing and eating the seals and by fishing in El Río, but with no fresh water here he was lucky to be rescued before dehydration set in. Only 2½ square miles in area, the island is now frequented mainly by fishermen – there's a tiny community called El Puertito on the east coast – for the fishing grounds round here are particularly rich. From both Corralejo and Isla de Lobos there are hazy views of Lanzarote's hills to the north, only 7 or 8 miles away across the channel of La Bocaina.

13 Lanzarote

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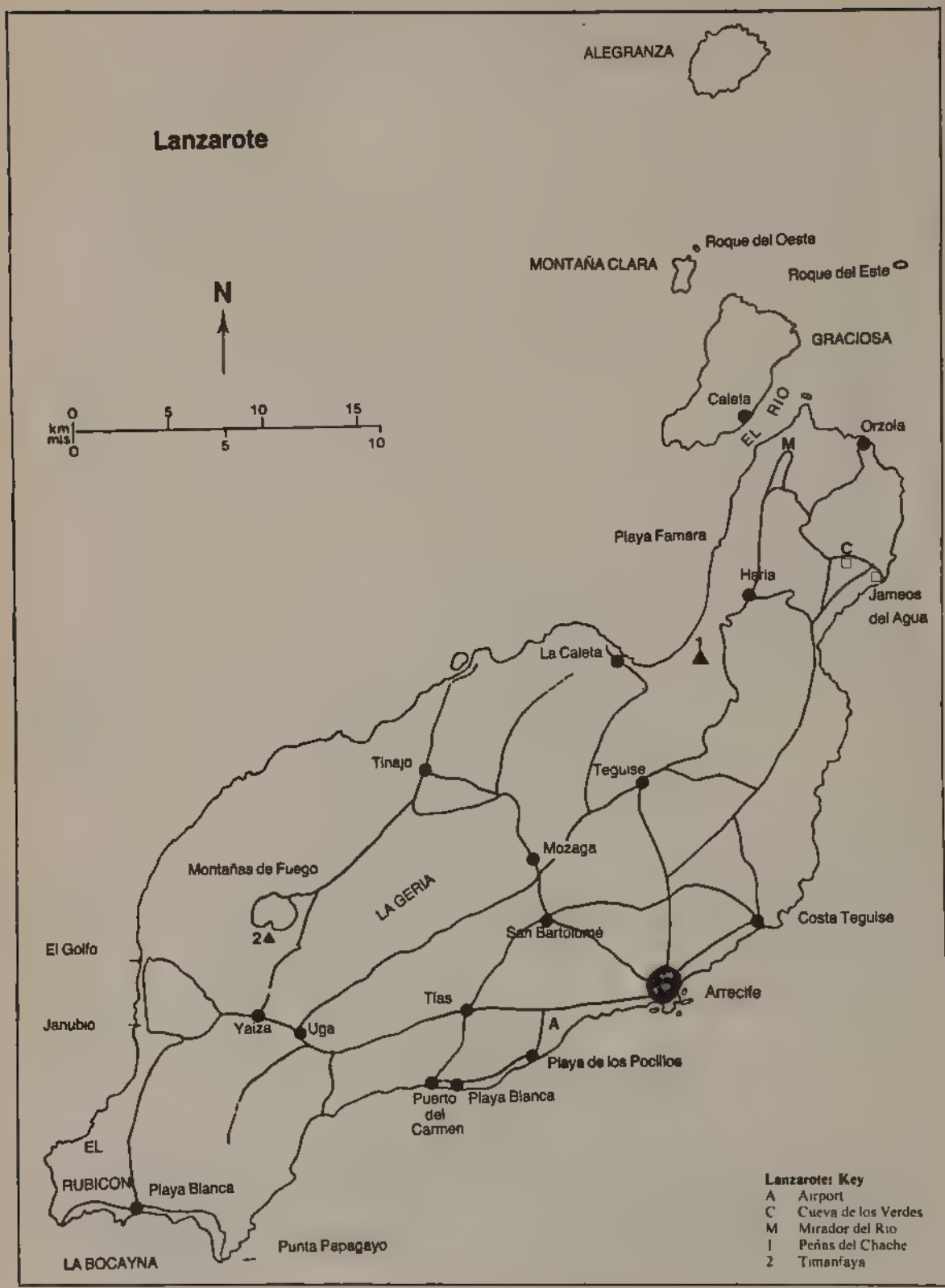
Like all the other Canary Islands in that it is *unlike* all the other Canary Islands, Lanzarote is definitely something different. Picture a lunar landscape, colour it red and black with a sprinkling of white houses, surround it with a rippling blue-green ocean and you have some idea of the dramatic beauty of this extraordinary place. There are hundreds of low volcanic cones barely containing their heat and activity, whose eruptions in past centuries have transformed the island's shape, sending streams of lava oozing into the sea and scattering thick ash across the countryside. Grim? Not at all. Marvellous, certainly, even mysterious – and increasingly attractive to travellers sated with mere prettiness. Now Lanzarote is being groomed for the upmarket holiday industry, with ultra-luxurious hotels, exclusive small resorts and all manner of excellent facilities for the visitor. From the moment you arrive at the charming little airport, the island impresses you with its thoughtfully planned services, its pristine cleanness, its cared-for look. And that is to a large extent due to the energy of one very remarkable man: César Manrique, of whom more below.

Less than 10 miles north of Fuerteventura, Lanzarote is the most easterly and the most northerly of the Canaries, and at roughly 320 square miles in area it's the fourth largest. To Lanzarote belong five of the six minor islands that complete the archipelago: **Graciosa, Alegranza, Montaña Clara** and **Roques del Oeste** and **del Este** (the sixth is **Isla de Lobos**: see previous chapter). It's also the least mountainous of the Canary Islands, but has a range of low volcanic hills running north-east/south-west, culminating in the peaks of Peñas de Chache, just


Lanzarote
ALEGRANZA
MONTAÑA CLARA
Roque del Oeste
Roque del Este
GRACIOSA
N
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km
mls
0 5 10
Caleta
EL RIO
Orzola
M
Playa Famara
C
Haria
Jameos del Agua
La Caleta
1
Tinajo
Teguise
Mozaga
Montañas de Fuego
LA GERIA
2
San Bartolomé
Costa Teguise
El Golfo
Tias
Arrecife
Janubio
Yaiza
Uga
A
Playa de los Pocillos
Puerto del Carmen
Playa Blanca
EL RUBICON
Playa Blanca
Punta Papagayo
LA BOCAYNA
Lanzarote: Key
A Airport
C Cueva de los Verdes
M Mirador del Rio
1 Peñas del Chache
2 Timanfaya

under 2,200 ft. The coasts are mainly level, with many fine sandy beaches, particularly in the south at **Playa Blanca Sur** and in the north at **Playa Famara**. It seldom rains here, even clouds are rare, though an occasional light mist descends at night, soaking into the volcanic ash that covers fields and gardens and thus creating moisture enough to water tender roots. Naturally the water shortage is extreme, and the only solution is expensive desalination schemes, not only for agricultural purposes but to satisfy the hordes of holiday-makers envisaged for the future.

History. Lanzarote was the first of the Canaries to be conquered. Jean de Bethencourt arrived in 1402 with a company of 250 men including his fellow Norman, Gadifer de la Salle, and two friars who were to be chroniclers of the Conquest. They anchored first off Alegranza, then proceeded south to Lanzarote itself. The island had already been mapped by the Genoese in the first half of the 14th century and the map bears the arms of one Lancelotto Malocello across the outline of Lanzarote; it's thought that this is how the island acquired its name, *Insula Lanzarote* being the Latinized version of 'Island of Lancelotto'. Of Lancelotto we do not know much; he was Genoese, he was a merchant sailor and he probably came here in search of orchilla, the lichen used as a purple dye, but he certainly cannot have antagonized the natives by seizing slaves or property because when Bethencourt arrived they gave him a very friendly welcome. The Guanche king, Garafía, paid homage to the Norman leader and offered him everything he wanted in return for protection from pirates, who'd been decimating the native population in a series of slaving raids. Bethencourt must have been much encouraged by this reception; leaving his men to build a fortress at the Rubicon in the south, he went off to conquer the rest of the archipelago.

In 1406 the Rubicon fortress became the seat of the Canaries' first bishopric when Bethencourt went to Spain and found Alberto de las Casas ready to take on the mantle of bishop; he then bequeathed his rights over the islands to his nephew Maciot, went home to France and never returned. In 1448 Maciot de Bethencourt sold those rights to Prince Henry of Portugal, so the Canaries temporarily came under Portuguese rule, but only four years later Prince Henry surrendered the islands and Lanzarote then became one of the *islas señoriales* under Diego de Herrera. Herrera based himself at Teguise, which soon developed into the island's first capital.

Like Fuerteventura, Lanzarote suffered terribly from attacks by pirates and slavers; the English raided the island in 1596 and 1730, but most of all it was the Moors who sailed across from north-west Africa

only 80 miles away to raid the early settlements and capture slaves, while the islanders could only take refuge behind their fortress walls or hide in the caves, even flee to Fuerteventura to escape these murderous visitors.

Then in 1730 volcanic activity became the enemy. Timanfaya started to erupt and didn't stop for seven years, exploding in a constant stream of lava, cinders and ash that destroyed eleven towns and covered nearly 70 square miles of rich old farmland. Once again the islanders had to leave their homes, and when they returned they found a huge desolate sea of lava, aptly called *malpaís* (badlands). For nearly a hundred years there was peace, broken again in 1824 when another major eruption began. Lasting only three months and less violent than the earlier one, this eruption resulted in the birth of three new volcanic cones, including Tinguaton which spouted steam and columns of scalding salt water. Lanzarote's volcanoes have been dormant for over a century now, but they are by no means extinct, as visitors to the Fire Mountains soon discover (see below).

Today. Lanzarote now has a population of around 50,000, roughly half of them living in the capital, Arrecife. Despite the *malpaís* and lack of rainfall, agriculture makes a very worthy contribution to the island's economy, thanks to the islanders' ingenuity and hard work. They have covered half the landscape with black *picón*, that usefully absorbent volcanic ash which sucks up any moisture in the air; every ten years or so the *picón* has to be topped up as it gradually gets mixed into the soil. Another trick the islanders use as a defence against winds is to scoop shallow bowls in the soil, plant the vine or whatever it is, fill the bowl with *picón*, and then build protective stone walls to windward. It's laborious but effective, particularly with vines – Lanzarote is famous for its *malvasía* (malmsey). Other crops include cereals, tomatoes, melons and figs, and in a few places the cochineal insect is still cultivated on rows of opuntia cacti. There are very few domestic herds, just donkeys and camels, used in the fields as well as for humping tourists around.

Tourism now is the main industry, with even greater potential for the future, thanks to the climate, the natural wonders and the controlled development of excellent facilities. It's here that **César Manrique's** work must be explained. Born in Lanzarote in 1920, he has become an artist and sculptor of international fame, having studied and exhibited all over the world; he now lives in the island in a bizarre but beautiful house that he built himself, and besides producing his unique works of art he directs his efforts to promoting tasteful design and development in the island. As 'artistic consultant' to the Cabildo (local government) he has man-

aged to influence the planning and execution of holiday complexes, road building, landscaping, refuse disposal, the airport, specific tourist attractions like nightclubs, restaurants and swimming pools – and just about everything else the visitor's eye lights upon. Thanks largely to him, there are no crass advertisements, and no multi-storey hotel blocks to spoil the views, density of housing is controlled and new developments are designed to harmonize with the landscape. He calls himself an 'ecological artist', protecting the environment and preaching against man's clumsiness and irresponsibility. Fifteen years ago, he says 'Lanzarote was the Cinderella of the Canary Islands. . .We began to give back the island its own original, volcanic character, to emphasize its unique landscape and to improve and impose a clear, sober, elegant and popular style of architecture. . .' But now: 'Lanzarote is becoming a utopia and the whole world is looking upon it as a model scheme.' César Manrique doesn't need to exaggerate, the proof of what he says can be seen all over the island.

Restaurants in Lanzarote

Arrecife
Abdón, Canalejas 58.
Café de Paris, Avenida Mancomunidad 36.
Costa Brava, Avenida Generalissimo 4.
Montaña Clara, Hermanos Zerolo 28.
Guigua, Triana 5.
Guanapay, Fajardo 38.
Los Troncos, Juan de Quesada 59.
México, Avenida Mancomunidad 16.
Los Canarios, León y Castillo 39.
Mesón Los Pollos, Canalejas 52.
Tamia, Avenida Mancomunidad 10.
Martin, Plaza Calvo Sotelo.
Pekin, Avenida Mancomunidad.
El Molino, Carretera Muelle.
Castillo San José (2 km from town).

Puerto del Carmen
Dionysius.
Varadero (closed Sunday).
Barracuda.
Pizzeria Italiana.
El Golfo.

El Timon.
Terraza (flamenco every night).
Chihuahua.
Albatros.
El Bueno.
Rey Carlos.
Hong Kong.

Playa de los Pocillos
Pigalle.
El Grill.
China.
Pizzeria Napolitana.
Chez Fernand.

Playa Blanca Sur
Playa del Sol.
Playa Blanca.

Inland
El Diablo, Montañas del Fuego.
El Volcán, Yaiza.
La Ena, Yaiza
Los Remedios, Yaiza.
Timanfaya, Uga.
Don Manuel, Tao.
Acatife, Teguise.
Fogón Oriental, Teguise.

In the North
Los Cocoteros, Guatiza.
Los Helechos, Haría.
Jameos del Agua (see text).

Nightlife in Lanzarote

Arrecife
Bambu, Avenida Mancomunidad.
Arrecife Gran Hotel, Avenida Mancomunidad.
Play Boy, Alicante 1.
Lanzarote de Noche, Carretera Teguise.

Puerto del Carmen/Los Pocillos
Cueva Blanca.
Tahiche Club (Hotel Los Fariones).
Beach Club.
Alfil.
Alhambra.

In the North
Salinas Hotel, El Charco (6 km from Arrecife).
Jameos del Agua (see text).

Festivals in Lanzarote
5 January: *Cabalgata de los Reyes Magos* (Teguise.
February: *Carnaval* (Arrecife).
24 June: *Fiesta de San Juan* (Haria).
29 June: *Fiesta de San Pedro* (Máguez).
7 July: *Fiesta de San Marcial del Rubicón* (Playa Blanca Sur).
16 July: *Fiesta de Nuestra Señora del Carmen* (Teguise).
August: *Fiesta de San Ginés*, patron saint of Arrecife. Special cele brations lasting for the whole month include camel-drawn carts in colourful processions, displays of traditional dancing and cultural events.
8 September: *Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (Teguise).
15 September: Celebration to honour *Virgen de los Volcanes* (specially in Tinajo).

Arrecife

Capital of Lanzarote, Arrecife is a thriving port on the sheltered east coast, with a population of around 25,000. Teguise, the former capital, has more in the way of historical monuments but this little town has plenty to attract sightseers.

Most strikingly, the town is protected by a natural barrier of rocky islets linked to the mainland: **Islote de los Ingleses, Islote del Francés, Islote de las Cruces** and **Islote de Amor.** On the first one stands the 16th-century **Castillo de San Gabriel**, a squat honey-coloured fortress with thick walls and a few rusty cannons. It was built by the Italian Torriani to defend the port from pirates, and is connected to the town by a drawbridge dating from the same period **Puente de Las Bolas** Inside it is an archaeological museum, small but full of fascinating exhibits including fossils, subaqua finds, Guanche relics and reproductions of

Guanche art/doodles (open 9 am - 1 pm and 4 pm - 7 pm; admission 50 ptas). Another larger fortress is situated to the north of town near the main port; this is the 18th-century **Castillo de San José.** Recently restored, it too houses a museum, a superbly designed (by César Manrique) gallery of modern art with a collection of works by contemporary Spanish and foreign artists.

Along the waterfront overlooking the Castillo de San Gabriel is a pretty paved promenade beneath pergolas of purple bougainvillea, with the island's **Tourist Office** at one end. Also worth a visit is the town's principal church, the 18th-century **Iglesia de San Ginés,** dedicated to Arrecife's patron saint and overlooking the fishing harbour, **Charco de San Ginés**. The main port, deeper and more capable of receiving the visiting cruise ships, is **Puerto de Naos,** about two miles north of the fishing harbour.

Around the Island

From the airport, about 4 miles south of Arrecife on the coast, the road heads west to Tías but a diversion takes you south to the coast and a small grouping of select resorts. **Playa de los Pocillos** is the first, with a good long beach, then **Playa Blanca** and **Puerto del Carmen** running into each other. Puerto del Carmen was the first fishing village in Lanzarote and it has managed to retain its dignity amidst the tourist development. This is upmarket holiday country, with two or three excellent hotels, several very attractive villa-and-apartment complexes, lots of restaurants and bars and boutiques. From Playa Blanca (not to be confused with the other one, Playa Blanca Sur in the south), the road returns to **Tías,** a small town of no special interest, and rejoins the main highway southwest.

The next town of any size is **Uga,** 7 miles away, with the characteristic North African-style architecture: single-storey whitewashed houses with flat roofs, also whitewashed, contrasting with the dark *picón* and dotted around with palm trees and gardens. Nearby **Yaiza** has a similarly pleasing appearance, and an 18th-century church with a handsome campanile overlooking the central plaza. To the west of Yaiza a minor road leads to **El Golfo** on the coast, a spectacularly beautiful and serene spot where there is an emerald-green lagoon right next to the blue sea. The lagoon lies in what is thought to be the crater of a collapsed volcano, flanked by tall dark cliffs, and though very salty it makes a great natural swimming pool. Some miles to the south is **Janubio**, where a large coastal lake is harvested for salt, divided into rectangualar

salt-pans; the piles of salt collected after evaporation glint in the sunlight like small white volcanic cones, ready for transportation to the fish factories and for export. The lake is popular with migrant and resident waterfowl, and so also with ornithologists.

Still continuing south, the road finally reaches the southernmost resort, **Playa Blanca Sur**, a small fishing village close to some of the island's best beaches. This is in the area called **El Rubicón**, where Bethencourt established the first settlement and had his fortress built; some barely discernible ruins at the nearby **Punta Papagayo** are thought to be all that remains of the fortress. Some miles to the west, nearer Playa Blanca, there is an 18th-century fort called **Torre del Aguila**, sometimes thought to be Bethencourt's fort but dating from much later, watching over the beach where Bethencourt and his companions landed, **Playa de Las Coloradas**. From all along this southern coast there are marvellous views of little sandy coves beneath steep cliffs and across the 7-mile wide strait of La Bocayna to Isla de Lobos and Fuerteventura.

Now returning to Yaiza, the road north out of town heads for the **Montañas del Fuego** (Fire Mountains). Crossing the *malpaís*, fields of black petrified lava, we reach the foot of the dark volcanic cones that are now part of Lanzarote's extraordinary National Park. The ascent can be made on camel back (they're dromedaries actually but everyone calls them *camellos*), for strings of harnessed beasts with wooden seats on either side of their humps await the tourist at the volcano base; their broad flat feet can cope more easily with the loose cinder slopes. From the summit there's a unique view over the surrounding wasteland, the lower craters, the whole lunar landscape of purple shadows and fiery red scoriae. Dormant though they may be – they haven't erupted since 1824 – the volcanoes' intense heat is dramatically demonstrated when the tour guide drops a bunch of twigs into a hole and it bursts into flames. But although temperatures reach 400°C just a few feet below the surface, the cinders are not noticeably hot to the touch. The heat is harnessed by a volcanic kitchen and restaurant encircling one of the lower summits where you can eat a meal cooked by the volcano itself! Another diversion visits the **Tacita de Chocolate** (Little Cup of Chocolate), affectionately called 'the apprentice volcano', its tiny crater lined with dark chocolate-coloured slag.

Leaving this awe-inspiring landscape behind and continuing north, the road now skirts the northern limits of the region called **La Geria**, the island's wine-producing area, where vines are grown in hundreds of *picón*-filled mini-craters scooped out of the soil and sheltered from the wind by low semicircular stone walls; it's a remarkable sight, these tidy patterns covering the plain for as far as you can see, and evidence of the

islanders' determined ingenuity. Around **Tinajo**, the crops are mainly tobacco and tomatoes; then the main road returns south-east towards Arrecife through the typically African looking villages of **Tiagua** and **Mozaga** towards **San Bartolomé**, La Geria's main town. Near Mozaga, geographical heart of the island, rises the 30 ft sculptural monument called **Fecundidad**, the work of César Manrique and raised in the late '60s as his tribute to the island's workers.

From here a road north leads to **Teguise**, one of the oldest towns in the archipelago and Lanzarote's capital until the 18th century. Founded by Jean de Bethencourt's nephew Maciot, it exudes history at every turn, and is still considered the island's principal town. Known for its folkdancing and crafts – this was the birthplace of the *timple*, the Canaries' unique musical instrument – Teguise has several historical buildings of particular interest. On the outskirts high on an extinct volcanic cone, with commanding views over Teguise and as far south as Fuerteventura, stands the **Castillo de Guanapay**, a 16th-century fortress built on the ruins of an even older fort raised by Maciot de Bethencourt. In town is the **Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe**; the church which was mostly destroyed by fire (originally 17th century, rebuilt this century) has a handsome belltower of unadorned lava stone. Opposite stands the 16th-century **Palacio de los Spínola**, a fine old mansion which has recently been restored. The town's other principal monuments – also undergoing restoration – include the 16th-century **Convento de San Francisco** and the **Convento de Santo Domingo**, built some 150 years after the Franciscan convent. North of Teguise is **La Caleta** on the coast, a small but increasingly popular port with wide golden beaches and excellent fishing in the bay. **Playa de Famara** is a continuation of La Caleta's beaches, a 3-mile-long stretch of sand dunes beneath the tall Famara cliffs on Lanzarote's north west coastline. South of Teguise, on the coast near Arrecife, is **Costa Teguise**, a rapidly developing resort with characteristic style and exclusivity.

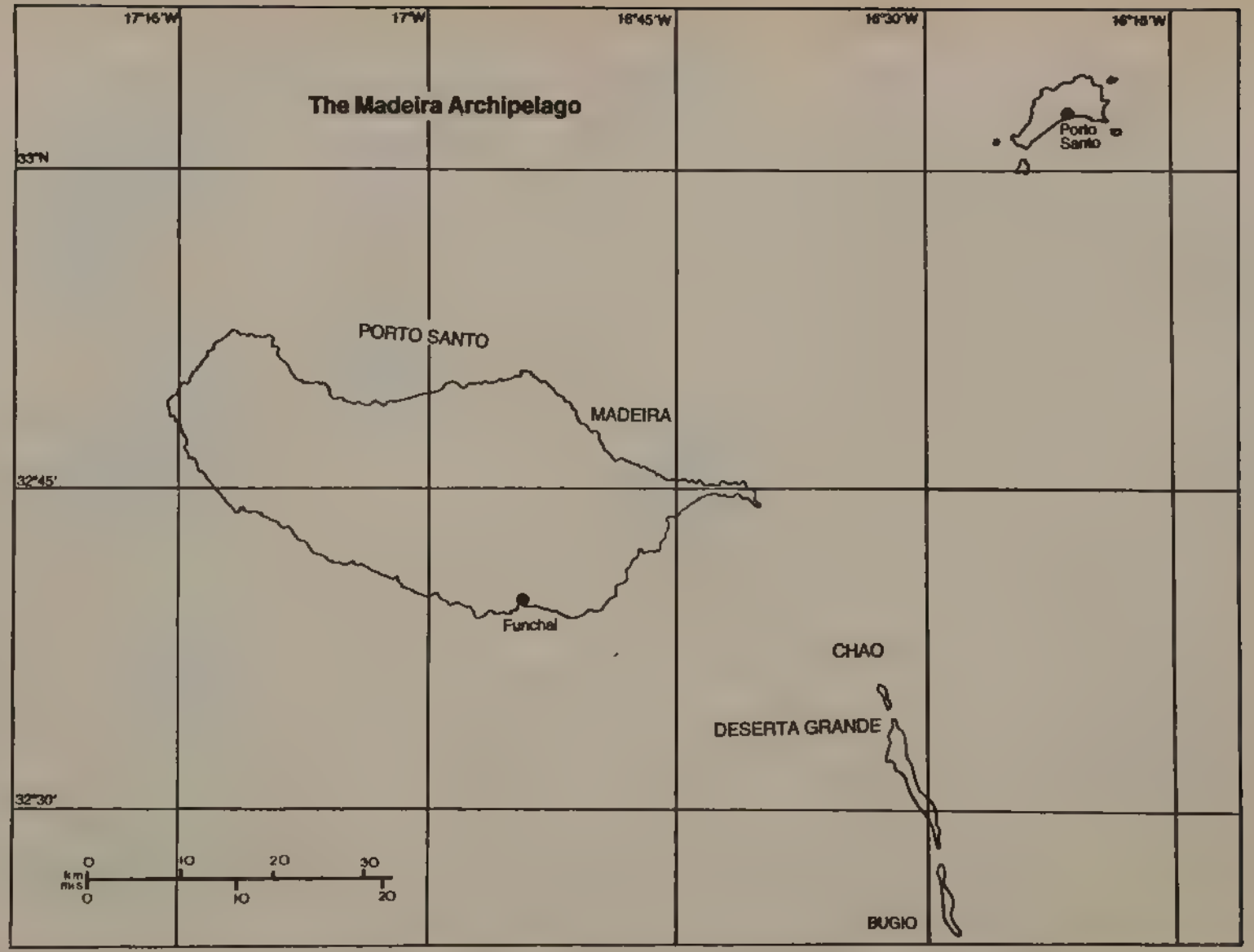
But following the main road north-east from Teguise, through the ridge of hills dominating the Playa de Famara, we are entering the dark rolling countryside around **Haría**, a small town amid some of Lanzarote's most fertile fields, the neat cluster of white houses interspersed with numerous palm trees. Finally we reach the northernmost tip of the island overlooking El Río, the narrow channel separating Lanzarote from its largest satellite island, Graciosa. Marvellous views of El Río and Graciosa can be obtained from **Mirador del Río**, an old battery on the cliffs of Famara. It's been transformed into a restaurant and glassed-in viewpoint of stunning beauty, by César Manrique of course.

Not far away on the north east coast is another natural phenomenon which has also metamorphosed under the eye of Manrique into one of the island's top attractions, **Cueva de los Verdes**. Thousands of years ago, a stream of molten lava solidified into a tunnel, the lava on the outside cooling more rapidly than the central flow, forming a series of caves over 4 miles long. A descent into the cave system starts an hour-long guided tour through the eerie echoing caverns, dramatically illuminated by concealed lighting. And at the seaward end of the caves there is a nightclub, **Jameos del Agua** (Windows of the Water). This has to be seen to be believed; even colour photographs cannot convey the atmosphere of the place. Two gaping holes in the earth lead to a deep central cavern over a shallow salt-water lake inhabited by a unique species of blind white crab, with small dance floors at either end and steep rocky terraces rising above them, lush ferns, cacti and other plants softening the dark jagged lava walls. Above the terraces there are tables and chairs where you can dine or drink while watching the dancers and the changing light patterns that explore the cave's rough surfaces, and periodically spot the scuttling white crabs in the clear blue-green waters of the lake. To one end near the entrance is a beautiful swimming pool, surrounded by plants and rock pools that are inhabited by turtles and ornamental fish. After a while one ceases to be astonished, simply absorbing it all with pure delight. The combination of unique natural beauty and man's artistry makes the Jameos del Agua an essential experience for every visitor.

Graciosa and the Island Satellites

The small island of **Graciosa** (16 square miles) just to the north of Lanzarote has been earmarked for future tourist development, with fine golden beaches and excellent fishing round its coast. To get there you can either join an excursion or hire a boat from the tiny port of **Orzola** in Lanzarote. Inhabited by a population of only 500, the island has two small hamlets: Caleta del Sebo opposite the Mirador del Río, and Pedro Barba in the north. It's a peaceful paradise and makes a delightful day-trip excursion from the mainland.

Next islet to the north is **Montaña Clara**, 0.5 square miles in area and uninhabited, like the two tiny islets of **Roque del Oeste** or **del Infierno** (of Hell) and **Roque del Este** far to the east, both of them a hazard to ancient and present-day shipping. And finally there is little **Alegranza**, less than 4 square miles in size, the only other inhabited island in the archipelago.


The Madeira Archipelago
17°15'W
17°W
16°45'W
16°30'W
16°15'W
33°N
32°45'
32°30'
Porto Santo
PORTO SANTO
MADEIRA
Funchal
CHAO
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PART II
MADEIRA

1 An Introduction to Madeira

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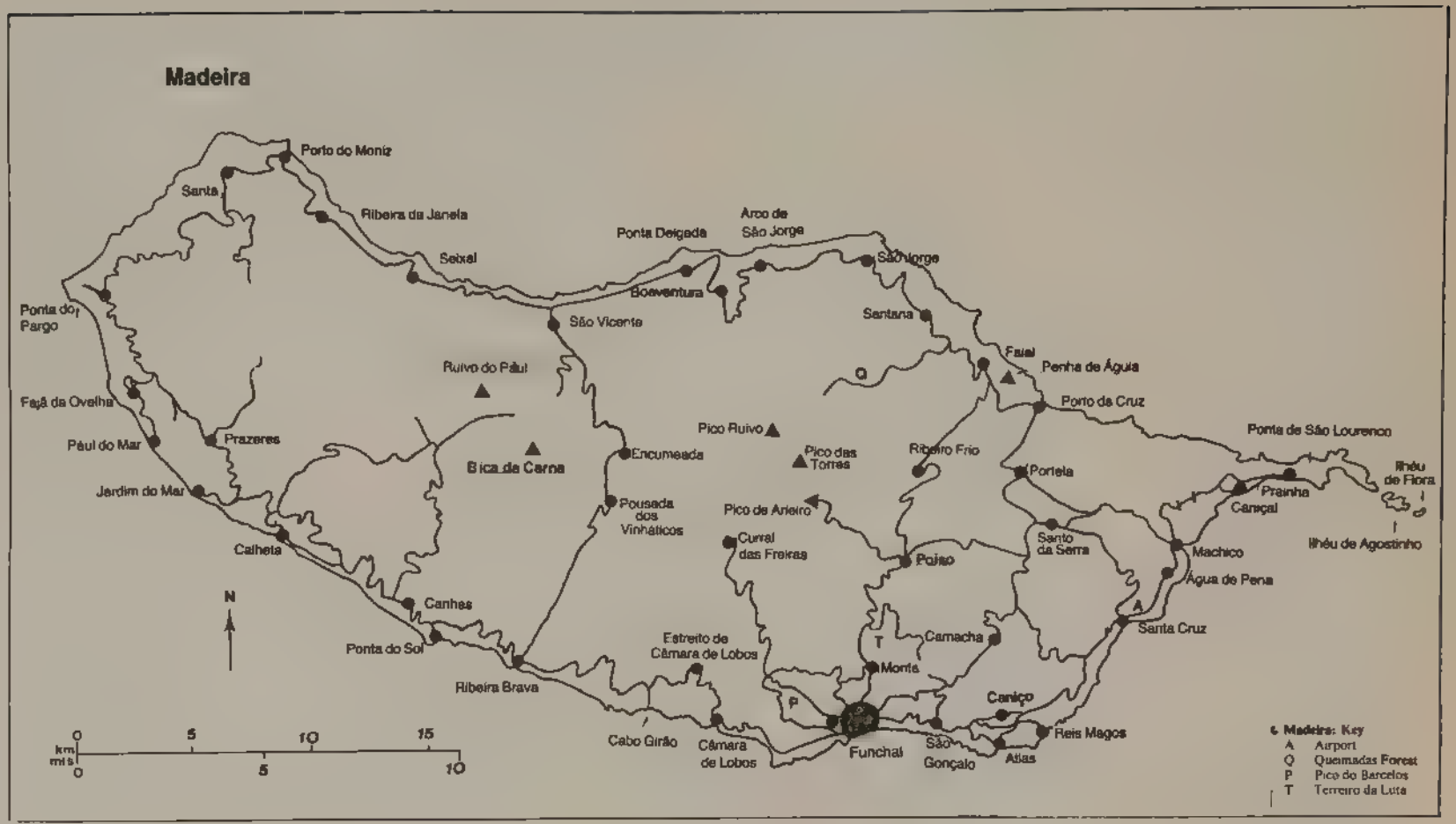
Madeira is an island of enchantment, full of happy surprises. Thanks to its subtropical situation, warmed by Atlantic currents and cooled by Atlantic breezes, it enjoys an almost perfect climate – never too hot, never too cool – and the scenery is breathtakingly beautiful. Wild volcanic peaks, descending through dense green vegetation and divided by deep ravines, finally fall sheer into the blue ocean; wild orchids and arum lilies illuminate the forests, hydrangeas line the roadsides and waterfalls cascade over steep rocky cliffs. After the arid sandy hotspots of the Mediterranean, this island offers a refreshing greenness, a breath of clean Atlantic air, a charm that is truly unique.

Part of that charm derives from the people of Madeira, warm, friendly and welcoming. Long accustomed to playing host to foreign travellers, yet still relatively unspoilt by the ravages of modern tourism, Madeira offers a variety of pleasures, with something for everyone but without the frantic claustrophobic air of so many European and other holiday resorts.

Many visitors return again and again to Madeira – and once you've been there you'll understand why.

Geography

Maderia is not just one island, it is a whole archipelago. As well as the island of Madeira itself, there is little Porto Santo away to the north-east, the only other inhabited island in the group, the three Ilhas Desertas


Madeira
Porto do Moniz
Santa
Ribeira da Janela
Seixal
Ponta Delgada
Arco de São Jorge
São Jorge
Boaventura
São Vicente
Santana
Ponta do Pargo
Ruivo do Paul
Faial
Penha de Água
Fajã da Ovelha
Porto da Cruz
Pico Ruivo
Ponta de São Lourenco
Paul do Mar
Prazeres
Bica da Cana
Encumeada
Pico das Torres
Ribeiro Frio
Portela
Ilhéu de Fora
Jardim do Mar
Pousada dos Vinháticos
Pico de Arieiro
Prainha
Caniçal
Curral das Freiras
Santo da Serra
Ilhéu de Agostinho
Calheta
Poiso
Machico
Água de Pena
N
Canhas
Santa Cruz
Estreito de Câmara de Lobos
Camacha
Ponta do Sol
Monte
Ribeira Brava
Caniço
Cabo Girão
Câmara de Lobos
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Madeira: Key
A Airport
Q Queimadas Forest
P Pico do Barcelos
T Terreiro da Luta

(Deserted Islands) facing Funchal, and finally the untidy scattering of distant rocks – nearer the Canaries than Madeira – known as the Ilhas Selvagens (Savage Islands).

Far out in the Atlantic, the main group of islands (excluding the Selvagens) lies 17° west of Greenwich, between Lat. 32°N and 34°N, the same latitude as Bermuda. Africa is only 350 miles away to the east, while Lisbon is some 600 miles to the north-west and Tenerife a mere 275 miles away.

Origin. Millions of years ago, a series of underwater volcanic explosions caused a great mountainous mass to erupt from the seabed, and it is the peaks of these submarine mountains that constitute the Madeira Islands. Not that there is anything too obviously volcanic about Madeira today – Lanzarote's Fire Mountains or the Capelinhos volcanic cone in the Azores have no equivalent here, and no eruptions have been recorded since the Portuguese arrived early in the 15th century. But the basalt rock, the black pebbly beaches, the tortured shapes of lava streams cooled by the sea, these all proclaim Madeira's volcanic origin.

Physical Features. The largest island in the group is Madeira, some 285 square miles in area, about 35 miles long by 14 miles wide. Almost wholly mountainous, Madeira has numerous peaks of more than 5,000 ft – the highest being Pico Ruivo (6,102 ft) – in a range that runs roughly east to west. Deeply divided by river valleys, these peaks are often obscured by clouds, their slopes green with dense vegetation, and, lower down, laced with row upon row of tiny cultivated ledges. The rivers carve their way down to the sea, their steep sides terraced by hard-working farmers, and streams cascade into the Atlantic waters via stupendous waterfalls over the sheer cliffs that make up most of Madeira's coastline. Sandy beaches are virtually nonexistent; for these you must go to Porto Santo.

Climate. Mild and delicious, Madeira's climate is enviable, with year-round sunshine and only moderate rainfall. The average temperatures vary between 16°C (61°F) in winter and 21°C (70°F) in summer, the hottest and dryest months being July-October when you can expect temperatures to reach a pleasant 25°-30°C. Rainfall is usually heaviest in November, though even then the month can pass without a single drop of rain. Winds are predominantly north-easterly or northerly, but once in a while a warm easterly wind blows in from the Sahara. Humidity is moderate, with little seasonable variation except when *l'este*, the Sahara wind is blowing. Sea temperatures are as equable as the air

temperatures, varying between about 17°C (63°F) in December/January and 21°C (70°F) in August/September.

In the mountains, weather conditions can be very different; there may be snow on the highest peaks even while the coasts are bathed in warm winter sunshine. Clouds and mists roll over the hillsides and the air is often cool and damp.

Flora and Fauna. Due partly to its climate and geographical situation, Madeira is a glorious wonderland of trees, plants and flowers. The tourist brochures call it 'A Floating Garden in the Atlantic' and for once you can believe them. This island is a botanist's paradise; whatever the season you can be sure of finding a profusion of blossoms, among them the wild orchids found only on Madeira. Other endemic species include the extraordinary dragon tree (elsewhere found only in the Canaries), pines, laurels and junipers.

When the Portuguese discovered it the island was covered in forests, and so they called it 'A Ilha da Madeira' (The Island of Wood). So dense was the vegetation that the early colonists had to set fire to the trees in order to clear space for construction and cultivation (there is a story that the fires raged for seven years, at one stage forcing the colonists into the sea to escape the flames). The native vegetation is today heavily out numbered by a huge variety of introduced plant life – from China, Japan, North and South America, Africa, Australia, and from Europe too. With the fertile soil and the excellent climatic conditions, practically any plant on earth can grow here; if the temperature is too warm at sea level, the plant will happily adapt to the higher slopes; thus, for example, there are sugarcane plantations at sea level, fruit trees casting their blossoms over the lower slopes and pine forests covering the higher peaks.

The variety is due to deliberate importing of foreign species both for commercial cultivation, such as the vine and banana, and for pure decoration; in the 19th century particularly, many new species arrived in Madeira for a period of acclimatization before transferral to the less clement final destinations further north. There are still dozens of fine gardens full of marvellous specimens from all over the world. In fact, the borderline between gardens and wild countryside is almost impossible to judge. Every house is covered in some climbing plant, be it a vine or a bougainvillea; geraniums and poinsettias spill their bright scarlet over white stone walls, roadsides are bordered with fat blue hydrangea bushes and agapanthus. The blossoms and colours and scents invade even Funchal in a constant blaze of hibiscus, flame trees or jacaranda; delapidated corners are covered in a brilliant sprawl of nasturtiums and

convolvulus. Driving through the mountains or strolling through the capital, the richness of Madeira's plant life will astound you. (A useful book for those who want to know more is available from the Maderia Tourist Board: *Madeira, Plants and Flowers* by Franquinho and Da Costa.)

The local fauna is less abundant. The only reptile is the lizard (scores of tiny ones demolish banana skins in the streets); a few rabbits survive the annual shooting season; frogs croak among the willows, and a myriad happy insects feast on the blooms. Over 200 bird species have been noted, some of them local variants of, for example, the chaffinch and firecrest, and about 40 species actually breed in Maderia. As is to be expected, the marine life is much the same as round the coasts of Europe. (Funchal's Municipal Museum houses a collection of the island's wild life, stuffed specimens upstairs, live wriggly specimens in the aquarium downstairs.)

History

The recorded history of the Madeira Archipelago begins only in 1418, when the Portuguese landed on Porto Santo and a year later arrived in Madeira itself. There is evidence to show that the Genoese had already discovered the islands some 60 years earlier but they evidently saw no point in claiming them for themselves. To go back any earlier in time is to find oneself immersed in ancient myths, although it is by no means fanciful to suppose that the Phoenicians and other sailors had known of the islands. If the Canaries can be identified as Pliny's 'Fortunate Isles', then the Madeira Archipelago may be his 'Purple Islands'; or maybe these are the true 'Hesperides', the islands of the setting sun, Land of the Blessed, where all good Greeks went after death.

Such a mysterious past is a natural breeding ground for legends, and one of the more probable concerns a 14th-century Englishman, variously called Robert Mackean or Machim. Robert had fallen in love with Anne d'Arset (or d'Arfet), a lady of noble birth whose family opposed the match. In 1346 the lovers fled the country, making for Brittany, but their ship was hit by storms and blown disastrously off course. Eventually they reached the safety of Madeira, where their ship promptly sank. The lovers fell ill and died; they were buried by their fellow castaways who then set to and built themselves another boat in which they sailed east to Africa. Further adventures befell the survivors: arriving in Africa they were captured by Moors and sold as slaves, but years later one or two of them found their way back to Europe to tell the story. Lending

weight to this legend is the fact that Machico, on the east coast of Madeira, is claimed by some to be named after Robert Mackean/ Machim; moreover, a tiny chapel once stood at Machico supposedly on the spot where they were buried, though it was destroyed by storms and floods in 1804.

Discovery. Historically, however, the discovery of the islands is ascribed to the Portuguese, and if one man deserves the credit more than any other it must be the Infante Dom Henriques – better known in the English-speaking world as Prince Henry the Navigator – who devoted his life to planning the great expeditions that made Portugal a world power. The Portuguese, like the Spanish, were seeking trade routes to the Far East, via the African continent, and two of Henry's protégés, João Gonçalves Zarco and Tristão Vaz Teixeira, were on their way to Africa in 1418 when they met a fierce storm. Spotting land on the horizon, they made haste to reach its shelter; in gratitude to God for their safe landing they named the island Porto Santo (Holy Port). Reporting back to Henry, they were authorized to return and undertake its colonization. On this second expedition, Zarco and Teixeira were accompanied by one Bartolomeu Perestrelo, destined to be the first governor of Porto Santo, whose baggage included a doe rabbit which produced a litter during the outward voyage; releasing his rabbits on Porto Santo, Perestrelo was thus responsible for the destruction of much of the island's vegetation.

Meanwhile, Zarco was continuing his explorations and in 1419 he discovered Madeira, only 25 miles away to the south-west. Landing at Machico (the bay is now named Baia de Zarco in his honour) he and his men made a preliminary survey of the island, hacking their way through dense forests and finding no trace of native inhabitants. As before he reported his discovery to Prince Henry, and in 1420 the official colo nization of Madeira began under the joint administration of Zarco and Teixeira.

Colonization. Appointed governor of the western half of the island, Zarco was based at Funchal, so named after the local abundance of *funcho*, the fennel plant. Teixeira, based at Machico, took the gover-norship of the eastern part of the island. A steady stream of colonists arrived, dividing the land between them, clearing the forests and building the first settlements. Their efforts were well rewarded; within a few years they were growing sugarcane, first imported from Sicily in 1425. Sugar in those days was a vastly profitable commodity, and so almost over night Madeira was making a valuable contribution to the Portuguese

economy. This attracted more colonists, and merchant ships came from all over Europe to trade with the Madeirans; the island had also become a useful port of call for Portuguese ships continuing Prince Henry's plans for exploration. Madeira's fame and prosperity increased still further with the success of its wine. The first vines were introduced from Italy and Greece in 1460 at the instigation of Prince Henry himself, shortly before he died, and so another lucrative trade sprang up, inviting yet more colonists from Portugal and mainland Europe to come and settle here.

Columbus. About this time, Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) arrived in Madeira, acting for a Genoese merchant in the sugar trade, probably in the 1470s. Himself a Genoese by birth, he had found his way to the Court of Lisbon where, little more than a penniless refugee, he nevertheless managed to marry the daughter of Bartolomeu Perestrelo, the minor nobleman who had been first governor of Porto Santo. It was not so surprising, then, that Columbus and his wife should choose to live first in Porto Santo and later in Funchal (1480-83). Already well acquainted with the Portuguese programme of maritime exploration, Columbus was now hearing stories all around him from European seafarers returning home after daring voyages out into the uncharted wastes of the Atlantic, and he became ever more convinced that some great undiscovered continent lay far to the west, beyond even the Azores (discovered 1427). In 1484 Columbus and his wife returned to Lisbon; he began to drum up royal support for his great adventure, first from João II of Portugal and then, nearly eight years later, from Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. So ends the Columbus-Madeira connection.

Early Development. Madeira's prosperity by the end of the 15th century depended very largely on the two crops, sugar and wine. Both were labour-intensive and the wealthy landowners soon found a source of labour in the Moorish and Negro slaves arriving on ships fresh back from Africa. The ground needed cultivation, the plants needed tending and most of all water-courses had to be constructed to irrigate the new plantations. The slaves gradually won their freedom, although slave labour was used well into the 18th century, and often intermarried with the colonists; the only modern trace of their influence is in some of the Madeiran folk dances.

The water-courses that the slaves had helped to build were of major importance to the island, and still are. *Levadas*, as they are called, carry water from mountain streams, winding round sheer precipices to irrigate the narrow terraces. Until the 20th century they also provided about the

only means of communication between different parts of the island; because of the mountainous nature of Madeira it was difficult to build roads, and even horses or donkeys found the gradients too steep.

The first main settlements, apart from Funchal and Machico, were Santa Cruz (where the airport is today) and Ponta do Sol on the south coast. Funchal gradually achieved dominance, partly thanks to its relatively sheltered harbour, and in 1508 it was proclaimed a city. Six years later the island's first bishopric was established there, when the building of the Cathedral was completed. The hereditary governorships that Prince Henry had granted to the families of Zarco and Teixeira had been abolished in 1479, evidently because of abuse of power by those concerned, and the island's ownership (like that Porto of Santo) reverted to the Crown.

The early 16th century passed quietly enough. The Madeirans' crops and trading ventures flourished, especially with the English and the Flemish who often paid for their purchases of sugar and wine with art treasures, hence many of the fine works in Funchal's Museum of Sacred Art.

Pirates. In 1566 a French ship arrived in Funchal harbour under the command of one Peyrot de Montluc. He and his fellow adventurers were heading for Africa and they apparently only put into Funchal for fresh provisions. But the Madeirans had heard about these French pirates and they feared the worst: they opened fire on his ship. De Montluc returned fire and took his revenge on Funchal; for a whole fortnight he and his companions plundered the city, looting and killing. Then he himself was killed and his companions lost heart and fled. Moors, English, French, Spanish – all who made their living out of this maritime mugging – constituted such a threat that the Madeirans built many little forts to defend their coasts, some of them still standing today, but the pirate problem here never reached the terrific proportions that applied in the Canaries.

The British

Portugal is sometimes referred to as England's 'oldest ally'; throughout the centuries the two nations have enjoyed a generally amicable relationship that formally began in 1386. British links with Madeira began in the 15th century, with Britain being one of the major importers of Madeira wine. By the 16th century there were already British settlers in the island, and in 1662, as a result of the marriage between Charles II of England and Catherine of Braganza, the British merchants acquired

certain privileges in the wide trade. (One story claims that, when the marriage treaty was being arranged, the Portuguese were going to offer Madeira to the British if other inducements proved unsatisfactory . . .) The British community here grew larger and wealthier and their influence still persists today.

Throughout most of the 17th and 18th centuries, Madeira's peace and prosperity was unmarred. The sugar trade had subsided after the Spanish introduced sugarcane into Cuba which promptly stole all Madeira's markets, but the wine trade was growing apace. Among visitors to the islands during this period was Captain Cook, who came twice (1768 and 1772) and evidently much admired the local flora.

The 19th Century. At the turn of the 19th century, the threat of a French invasion led to the Portugal calling up help from her 'oldest ally' and in 1801 the British sent troops to Madeira to protect the island against French occupation. One year later, when France and England had signed the peace treaty of Amiens, the British withdrew but in 1807 Napoleon's men invaded Portugal and Britain again sent out a force of 4,000 under Admiral Hood. When the British occupation of the island ended in 1814, with its Napoleonic threat now over, many of the British soldiers stayed on the island, marrying the local girls and settling down to farm or join the wine trade. As a footnote to the Napoleonic story, in August 1815 the deposed Emperor Napoleon was on a ship that called in at Funchal on the way to his place of exile, St Helena. Napoleon was not allowed ashore but the British consul boarded the ship and sold him some Madeira wine; the gold *louis* with which Napoleon paid for his purchases were later buried in the foundations of the English church in Funchal.

Following the Peninsular Wars, Portuguese liberals and reactionaries were battling for power and Madeira was not exempt from the consequent turmoil. The Regent Dom Miguel, hailed as King by the traditionalists, sent forces to Madeira to subdue any liberal elements lurking in the island; despite a spirited defence the islanders were overcome. Under Miguelist domination, Madeira repulsed efforts by the liberals to relieve the island in 1827 and it was not until 1834 that the conflict died down upon the accession of Maria II, legitimate successor to the throne.

Disasters. Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, Madeira suffered one natural disaster after another. In 1852 fungus blights attacked the precious vines and the potato crop too. No sooner had new plants been established than phylloxera struck them in 1873. Meanwhile, the islanders themselves had fallen victim to a terrible cholera epidemic

in 1856 which caused thousands of deaths. And then in 1882 the sugarcane was hit by disease – offset by the now reviving viniculture, thanks to the introduction of disease-resistant Californian vine grafts.

The 20th Century. In 1902, Madeira achieved a brief period of self-government, according to the so-called Statute of Neighbouring Islands, but by 1910 the island was again being administered from mainland Portugal, now a republic. In the First World War, Funchal harbour was twice attacked by German submarines which caused many casualties and widespread damage. After the war, the Madeirans returned to their peace-time pursuits relatively untouched by political upheavals on the mainland. In addition to the wealth created by the wine trade, Madeira was now established as a tourist resort; since the early 19th century, travellers had come to enjoy the mild winter climate, and Funchal's harbour was busy not only with merchant shipping but with cruise ships too. One visitor to Madeira, in 1921, was the ex-emperor Charles of Austria, exiled with his wife; he died a year later and his tomb can be seen in the church at Monte. 1921 also saw the arrival of the first seaplane in Madeira, a new form of transport that was eventually to revolutionize the local economy and the islanders' way of life.

The Great World Depression of the 1930s affected the Madeirans no less than other Europeans, and to many the solution seemed to be emigration. Like Ireland, Portugal has a long history of emigration (one 19th century historian called it 'the most important Portuguese export industry'), a phenomenon that continues to this day.

Under Salazar, Portugal in the 1930s had acquired a certain stability; once described as 'authoritarian but not quite fascist' he had no great love of Hitler or Mussolini and continued to recognize the value of the old Anglo-Portuguese alliance. Although Portugal remained neutral throughout the Second World War, Salazar allowed the British (in 1934) to evacuate thousands of Gibraltarians to Madeira, and after the war he hurriedly sought to re-establish good relations with the Allies, using the strategic position of Madeira (and the Azores) as a bargaining point to help get Portugal into NATO.

Post-war Madeira saw a new growth in tourism as the affluent escaped from Europe's ruins; a commercial seaplane service from England, started in 1949, brought among others Winston Churchill, who spent a painting holiday at Câmara de Lobos. Sachaverell Sitwell marvelled at the seaplane 'making the entire journey in a summer night' but a tragic accident put an end to their service in the mid-fifties and it was nearly ten years before commercial flights resumed to Madeira. The first airport was built on Porto Santo in 1962; passengers had to transfer to

the main island by boat until Madeira's own airport opened two years later. No longer merely a winter haven for the wealthy, the island now became a popular all-year-round holiday spot. New hotels were built and the tourist industry moved into top gear.

Events in mainland Portugal were to bring further changes to Madeira. Salazar had died in 1968 and his successor, Marcello Caetano, faced growing disillusionment among the Portuguese, resentful of low living standards and conscription for the wars in Angola and Mozambique. On 25th April 1974 the Army seized power under leftist leadership and two years later Portugal had its first free elections for over forty years, the democratic socialists gaining power. What this meant for Madeira (and the Azores) was administrative autonomy, guaranteed under the 1976 Constitution, though falling short of the total independence demanded by extremist elements in the island, whose separatist graffiti still adorn walls in Funchal.

Today

Now an 'Autonomous Region' of Portugal – with its own flag – Madeira has over 300,000 inhabitants, one third of whom live in the capital, Funchal. The island's wealth derives from two main sources: agriculture and tourism.

Agriculture. To make use of every possible square foot of land, past and present Madeirans have built numerous terraces that cover every tiny ledge, seemingly hewed out of the bare rocky mountainsides. So remote are many of the terraces that one puzzles over how the farmers can reach them, especially lugging a sackful of potatoes. Ploughs and tractors are no use, even donkeys cannot negotiate the climbs involved. The other major feature of local cultivation is the system of *levadas* – little channels, often barely a foot or two wide, taking water to the terraces. The more important *levadas* are state-owned and the distribution of water is governed by strict and complex regulations.

The main crops include of course sugarcane and grapes (more about these later). Sugarcane grows mainly at sea level but less now than formerly. Another valuable export crop is bananas, the flourishing plantations vying for space with sugarcane. First introduced into the island in 1842, the export variety is the Dwarf Banana or Cavendish Banana, also grown in the Canaries; another variety, the Silver Banana, is grown only for local consumption as it travels less well. Other fruits have adapted equally well to Madeira's climate, from the temperate apple to

tropical pineapple, passionfruit, avocado, pawpaw and mango. One curiosity to British visitors is the custard apple, whose scaly appearance has earned it the alternative name of 'crocodile fruit'. Local vegetables include potatoes, onions and beans, often grown beneath the vine trellises.

Domestic animals are also reared, though one seldom sees them; because of the lack of level pastures they are kept all year round in little thatched barns (*palheiros*) dotted all over the landscape. The farmer visits his *palheiros* daily to feed and milk his cows – and with artificial insemination it is easy to believe that some poor cows never so much as glimpse their calf's father.

Wine. Vines grow all over Madeira, though mainly in the south, trailing over terraces, climbing walls, decorating patios. As described above, the wine trade was already established in the 15th century, with Britain being a major importer (as early as 1478, the English Duke of Clarence drowned himself in a butt of Madeira wine!).

Madeira – the islands's name is synonymous with wine. In fact there are many varieties of grape grown on the island and the different wines are named after the grapes from which they are made. The famous Malmsey or *Malvoisie* comes from vines originally imported from Greece; Boal from Burgundy; Sercial from the Rhine; other include Verdelho, Terrantez and Tinta. Over three million gallons of wine are produced annually, half of it consumed locally, half fortified for export. The fortified wine has an interesting history: by accident, in the 18th century, merchants discovered that the wine they were shipping acquired a special mellow perfection after long tropical voyages in wooden casks in the ships' holds, and now those hot conditions are reproduced artificially in Madeira's many wine cellars.

In September the grapes are harvested, locally pressed, then the juice delivered to Funchal's wine cellars. In the cellar or *armazem*, the juice is fermented, fortified with brandy and submitted to the special *estufagem* process simulating those long hot voyages, for perhaps six months. A minimum of one year then passes while the wine matures in massive oak casks – but one characteristic of Madeira wine is that is improves with age. If you can afford it, or if your host is particularly generous, you may get a chance to taste wine that is over 100 years old; it's a drink for the gods, positively ambrosial. Sampling Madeira's more 'ordinary' wines is a must for all visitors; Funchal is full of the shippers' lodges (*adegas*) where you can taste the different varieties before making your mind up what to buy, and maybe enjoy a guided tour around the nearby *armazem*.

Tourism. The climate and beauty of Madeira attracts many holidaymakers all year round. Since the construction of the airport in 1964, increasing numbers of foreigners have discovered the island for themselves, and most hotels date from this period. The relatively slow start in the tourist industry meant that Madeira had a chance to plan and develop the facilities and services for foreign visitors, good news for both the island and the visitor. Very few high-rise hotel blocks mar the view, restaurants and nightclubs are generally unobtrusive, souvenir shops mingle with ordinary offices and stores. No wonder tourism here is thriving – but then such dignity and subtlety is characteristic of Mad eira. However, the old image of this as a place only for the rich and stuffy is no longer true; pavement cafés, friendly restaurants and bars and nightclubs – there is enough liveliness here to please the most outgoing of extroverts.

Fishing. This characteristic occupation of the Portuguese involves many Maderians. Some abundant local fish are mullet, bream, tuna, cod and *espada*, an evil looking deep-sea fish but delicious. The many fishing ports include Funchal itself and nearby Câmara de Lobos. There is also a small whaling port at Caniçal on the east coast.

Wickerwork. Stumpy willows grow all over the island but especially around Camacha, the basket-making centre. Thè supple rods are stripped of bark, bundled together for drying and storage, then boiled in water for hours to achieve the requisite flexibility. This is a truly cottage industry; craftsmen sit by the roadside fashioning all manner of basketry under the eyes of curious passers-by.

Embroidery. The exquisite needlework exported all over the world is, after its wine, Madeira's chief claim to fame. It was a 19th-century Englishwoman who built up the export industry, Miss Elizabeth Phelps. Daughter of a wine importer, she came to Madeira for her health and later took samples of local work back to London with her; these so impressed her friends that she returned to Madeira determined to organize an export industry and encourage the Madeiran woman to produce more of their handiwork. Queen Victoria herself sent out bales of fine Irish linen for Miss Phelps to have embroidered. The designs are transferred onto fabric – anything from organdy to heavy linen – by women working in factory shops, but every other stage is completed by hand by woman working at home. Today the industry involves around 70,000 women and makes a significant contribution to the island's economy.

Flowers. A more recent export trade, established since the airport was built, is in flowers. With Europe only an hour or two away by air, Madeira's floral riches can easily be transported to the shops of London, Paris and Berlin, and now the flowers are cultivated for those northern markets, especially orchids, the 'bird of paradise flower' (*Strelitzia reginae*), arum lily and flamingo flower (*Anthurium andreanum*). All of these and more are sold all over the island; flower-sellers are required by law to wear colourful traditional costume and they and their fragrant displays add a brilliant splash to many a street corner.

The People

Portuguese by nationality, the inhabitants nevertheless consider themselves Madeirans first, Portuguese second. They speak Portuguese but with a slightly different flavour than in *O Continente* (as they call mainland Portugal) and many people, especially in Funchal, are bilingual thanks to the long and special ties with Britain. In character they are warm and hospitable, very friendly to visitors – particularly the British! – but with a certain reserve, a desire not to intrude perhaps, that differentiates them from the Spanish. Hardworking (viz those terraces and *levadas*), religious, conservative and independent, they are in many ways typical of all islanders.

Sad to say, there is still some very obvious poverty; women in drab shawls hold out a pleading hand, children scamper eagerly after tourists and men loiter aimlessly around the fishing quays.

Never difficult to meet, the Madeirans are always ready to celebrate, and their many festivals are a special delight for the visitor; folk groups entertain with music and dancing and all manner of open-air merriment attracts the crowds. Some of these folk dances are of Moorish origin, reflecting the influence of the slaves who came to labour on the sugarcane plantations; one in particular, the *Ponta do Sol*, involving short steps and bowed heads, imitates the humble demeanour of men with their feet chained. Other dances have been inspired by local occupations, grape-crushing or harvesting for example. The musical instruments include the ubiquitous guitar, mandolin and two Madeiran specialities: the *machête* (like a guitar) and the *brinquinho*, an extraordinary percussion instrument – a wooden stick surrounded by little dancing figures that clatter and tinkle as they are rattled. The women's traditional costume comprises a white blouse beneath an embroidered waistcoat and scarlet cape, over a brilliantly striped skirt, while the men wear white shirts and knickerbockers with waistcoats and cummer-

bunds and tasselled skullcaps on their heads. Labourers working on the roads or in the fields commonly sport a strange woolly cap with earflaps and a pompom on top, but this is about the only form of local costume normally worn by the menfolk. Both men and women wear the traditional soft-hide boots (*botachões*), the cuffs turned down low to the ankle.

Imported from Portugal, specially for the tourists, is the mournful *fado*, songs about fate and destiny, usually accompanied by guitars and performed mostly in Funchal's *fado* houses.

Festivals. As well as the national Portuguese holidays, the Madeirans enjoy plenty of their own *festas* (festivals). These mainly take the form of religious *romarias*, pilgrimages to a chapel or church to honour the local patron saint, processions that wind through decorated streets, often accompanied by folk music and dancing. One of the most impressive takes place in August, to celebrate the Feast of the Assumption at Monte, a pretty village high above Funchal; pilgrims assemble from all over the island to attend mass at the church and to worship the island's patron saint, *Nossa Senhora do Monte* (Our Lady of the Mount), and for two days the village throngs with thousands of people making merry among the side-stalls, fairylights and bunting.

Similar local festivals take place at Ribeira Brava (in June), Ponta Delgada, Calheta and Machico (all in September). Funchal celebrates two saints' days in particular: Santo Antonio and São João da Ribeira (both in June). Many other *festas*, centering on Funchal, include the cheerful carnival before Lent, a Flower Festival in March-April, the Madeira Car Rally (August) and the Grape Harvest or Wine Festival (September). Finally and most spectacular of all is Funchal's New Year's Eve festival or *Noite de São Silvestre*. Visitors come from all over the world to pack the hotels, cruise ships fill the harbour and the Madeirans jostle each other for a better view along the waterfront as, on the stroke of midnight, the sky explodes in a brilliant firework display. Church bells ring out, ships' sirens blare, the crowds dance and sing in the illuminated streets as Madeira greets the New Year.

2 Getting There and Getting Around

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By Air

The Madeira Islands have two airports: one on Madeira itself and one on Porto Santo, the latter used mainly for internal flights between the islands. Almost all international flights go to Funchal's airport, 14½ miles east of the capital, on the coast near the old village of Santa Cruz. Plans are being made to extend the airport, though looking down from the air one wonders *how*: the single runway stretches from end to end of a narrow ledge above the sea with no room to spare. Long-haul flights and big jets cannot land here, even smaller planes have to apply extra break power and noisy reverse thrust lest they teeter over the cliff. And because the runway is so short, many planes cannot take off with full fuel tanks and have to stop off en route for the more distant destinations. All of which helps to explain why there are so few direct services to Funchal.

Scheduled Flights. TAP (Air Portugal) runs all the scheduled services to Madeira.

1. *From the UK*: In winter there are two direct flights a week from London Heathrow (more around Christmas). Flying time is about 2½ hours. In summer there are up to a dozen flights a week from Heathrow or Gatwick, most stopping en route at Lisbon, which naturally lengthens the journey time. From Manchester there are two flights a week in the

summer, stopping at Lisbon on the way. The present one-way adult economy fare, London to Funchal, is about £220 (£440 return); excursion fares are around £185-£292 return depending on how long you are going for and what time of year you're travelling.

2. *From the USA*: There are no direct scheduled flights to Funchal; all flights go via Lisbon and require a transfer to a smaller plane. Up to four planes a week in summer leave New York (JFK Airport) for Lisbon, flying overnight. The whole journey takes some $10\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

3. *From Canada*: In summer there are three or four flights a week leaving Montreal's Mirabel Airport for Funchal, all going via Lisbon.

4. *From Portugal*: Several daily flights link Lisbon with Funchal, a mere forty minutes' flying time away, all year round.

5. *From the Azores*: TAP do regular twice-weekly flights to Funchal from Ponta Delgada in São Miguel. The journey takes $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours; the economy one-way fare is presently about £45/US$80.

6. *From the Canaries*: TAP also provide a twice-weekly service from Las Palmas in Gran Canaria, all year round. The journey takes one hour and the economy one way fare is presently about £55/US$100.

For details of all these flights, apply to TAP offices or to any travel agent.

Charter Flights. These are usually a much better bet than scheduled services, in terms of both cost and convenience, with a wider choice of departure points. Your travel agent can help you here; in Britain, for example, Thomas Cook have an excellent scheme called 'Fareshares' which include a nominal sum for accommodation but which in fact provides return flights for around £100 and lets you make your own accommodation arrangements (flights from Gatwick and Manchester). Or you can find out about charter flights by consulting the advertisements in most newspapers.

Package Holidays. Don't ignore the tour operators' all inclusive 'packages'; they offer a cheap and easy way to organize accommodation and flights and after all you do not have to follow the herd around.

Inter-Island Flights. Porto Santo, twenty minutes' flying time from Funchal, is visited by a few international flights but mainly by the local 'bus' service from the main island. There are at least four flights daily; present one-way fares are around £8.50/US$15 (double for return trip).

The other islands, the Desertas off Funchal and the Selvagens near the Canaries, are visited only by seagulls and the Portuguese Air Force.

By Sea

Funchal is the main port in Madeira and the only one capable of receiving the many cruise ships and large cargo vessels which call in on their way to the Canaries or Africa. The vast majority of visitors to Madeira who come by sea arrive in cruise ships (see below) but one or two companies have irregular cargo sailings to Madeira from Lisbon which will also take a few passengers (with cars, if you're really determined to take yours with you); to find your way around their complicated schedules you definitely need the assistance of a good travel agent.

Shipping lines running regular cruise services to Funchal are Fred Olsen Lines, Royal Viking Line and P & O Cruises. For British travellers, the best choice is offered by Fred Olsen, sailing either from London (Tilbury Docks) or Rotterdam. For North Americans, the choice is between the Royal Viking Line who do regular sailings from New York (seven days to Funchal, present cost around $1500) and flying to Europe to join the Fred Olsen cruises. Other occasional cruises take in Madeira, especially in winter; watch your newspaper ads columns or consult travel agents for details.

Fred Olsen Lines' ship *Black Prince* sails from Rotterdam in the Netherlands approximately once a fortnight in winter, calling at Lisbon four days later and reaching Madeira the following day. One-way and inter-port passengers are accepted, so you can join the ship at Lisbon if that is more convenient.

Two other Fred Olsen ships, *Black Watch* and *Blenheim*, sail from London approximately once a week (London-Funchal sailing time is four days). Both ships then continue to the Canaries, turn around and return home via Funchal; you could therefore stay in Madeira while the ship continues the trip and rejoin her a week later.

For details contact either your travel agent or the following offices:

1. *Fred Olsen Lines*
In the UK: 229 Regent Street, London W.1 (01-437 9888)
In the USA: Bergen Line, 505 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (212-986 2711)
In Portugal: Wiese Transportes SARL, Rio do Alecrim 12-A, Lisbon 2 (370 241)

In the Canaries: Agencia Fred Olsen SA, Maestro Valle 22, Ciudad Jardín, P O Box 252, Las Palmas, Gran Canaria (232 166)
In Madeira: João de Freitas Martins Lda, Avenida do Mar, Funchal (21 106)

2. *Royal Viking Line*
In the UK: Union Lloyd, 50 Curzon Street, London W.1 (01-409 0844)
In the USA: 15th Floor, 630 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10020 (212-757 0921)

P & O Cruises
In the UK: St Botolph Street, London E.C.3 (01-283 8080)
In the USA: 2029 Century Park East, Los Angeles, Calif. 90067 (213-553 1770)

Inter-Island Sailings. Funchal and Porto Santo are linked by one small boat, the *Pirata Azul*, run by the Organização Nautica Amigos do Mar. The head office of Amigos do Mar is in Funchal (Rua Dr Fernão do Ornelas 7-2°, tel. 24 390) or you can get information and tickets at the kiosk on the Cais (the little pier at the bottom of Avenida Zarco, from where the boat leaves). The schedule varies somewhat so it is vital to check when the boat sails (five days a week, at present) and even more so when she returns: the last boat usually leaves Porto Santo around 5 pm and if you miss it then you may end up sleeping on the beach. The adult return fare is currently about £2.80/US$5.00 and advance reservations are essential, particularly in summer when the Madeirans go to Porto Santo for their holidays.

Note that the crossing takes around 2½-3 hours, depending on the seas. In bad weather it's not much fun; passengers spill off the boat with green faces and wobbly legs, wishing they had taken the plane. In fine weather, though, it's an exhilarating trip.

Entry Formalities

Visitors to Madeira from Britain, Canada and the USA need only a valid passport; British subjects can even make do with the British Visitor's Passport available from post offices.

All visitors must register with the local police within 48 hours of arrival. This is automatically done for you by hotel receptionists; only those who stay in private villas and apartments need to bother.

Customs controls (*alfândega*) allow you to bring in the usual 200 cigarettes, 1 litre spirits, etc., without paying duty. On leaving the island.

don't expect any duty free bargains at the airport: prices there are the same as in Funchal.

Any amount of foreign currency can be taken into Madeira, but large amounts should be declared on entry or there may be problems taking it out again. There is, however, a restriction on Portuguese currency: you may presently take no more than 1,000 escudos with you.

Getting About

Once in Madeira you may feel like staying put; the hotels are so good that you may be tempted to spend all your time relaxing by a swimming pool or ambling between tennis courts and the bar. But anyone with the slightest curiosity will soon find the island's other attractions too great to be resisted.

It's easy to get about on the island; you can join the many excellent coach excursions or hire a car, take a taxi or a bus, even a boat trip. Or you can walk, the most rewarding way to get to know Madeira. There are no trains; the island is too small and mountainous to warrant railways, though there once was short stretch of line between Funchal and Monte. And again because of the terrain, bicycling is out.

Coach Trips. The advantages of joining an excursion as opposed to hiring a car are perhaps worth pointing out: you get taken to all the most interesting places, with English-speaking couriers who provide masses of information, and you have none of the worries over driving – the last point having special relevance as the island's roads are narrow, twisty and sometimes very hard to negotiate. And there's a great selection of trips, from short local hops to full-day tours round the whole island. Sightseers can find information at their hotels or at the Tourist Office in Funchal, but some of the major tour companies are listed below. Apart from the 'scenic tours' they also arrange visits to wine lodges, embroidery and wickerwork centres, the Botanical Gardens and Funchal's night spots, often collecting you from your hotel. Prices range from under 500 to around 1500 escudos per person according to the trip (say £4-12/US$7.50-$22.50.)

Blandy Brothers, Avenida do Mar/corner of Avenida Zarco, Funchal (20 161). Highly recommended, excellent variety of excursions.

CAT (Companhia de Turismo), Avenida Arriaga 52, Funchal (23 379). State-run.
Freitas Martins, Avenida do Mar 15, Funchal (21 106)
Madeira Tours, Rua Dom Carlos I 45, Funchal (20 965)
Rota do Atlantico, Rua Aranhas 18, Funchal (21 430)
Rota do Atlantico, Agua de Pena/Matur (54 311).

Driving. Taking your own car to Madeira is both expensive and complicated (though the motoring organizations can help) and car hire is the obvious solution (see below). Around Funchal the roads are fair, but narrow and busy, especially in the city itself where there are as yet no traffic lights; it's vital to remember that you should give way to vehicles coming from the right, as well as driving on the right, though at major crossroads there is usually a policeman to direct traffic. Away from Funchal the roads are often terrible: surfaces are either cobbled or roughly metalled and full of potholes, particularly in the mountains, and once in a while a landslide caused by heavy rains in the peaks can block the way. Above all, the roads are narrow and very twisty indeed; all too often you squeeze around a corner to meet a lorry or excursion coach, whereupon you have to reverse back round the corner till you reach a wider spot (when two coaches meet there are real problems). Sounding your horn frequently is not only the local custom, it's also the sensible thing to do.

Filling stations and mechanical services are scarce outside the big towns, so be sure to fill up the tank when you can. Speed limits vary according to what sort of vehicle you're driving; in towns the usual limit is about 40 kmh (25 mph) while country roads enforce their own speed limits. The official warnings – *Guie com cuidado, as estradas não são pistas* (Drive carefully, the roads aren't racetracks) – seems somewhat unnecessary. (See Appendix I for road signs.)

Car Hire Agencies. These are in plentiful supply. You need only a driving licence, though would be drivers must be over 21 (some places require you to be over 25, and sometimes to have had at least one year's driving experience). Sample terms, including insurance and unlimited mileage but excluding 'government tax' (4% on the total bill), are about £12/US$34 per day (£124/US$220 per week) for a Ford Escort.

Avis, Largo António Nobre 164, Funchal (25 246)
Avis, at the airport (52 392)
Avis, at Matur/Machico (54 279)
Avis, in Porto Santo (82 381)
Hertz, Rua Ivens 12, Funchal (23 332)
Hertz, at the GALP service station, Avenida do Infante, Funchal (26 026)
Hertz, at the airport (52 360)
Europcar, Rua Ivens 13 B, Funchal (23 872)
Rentacar, Rua dos Ferreiros 172, Funchal (22 946)
Rentacar, at the airport (52 441, extension 354)

Taxis. Hiring a taxi is easy. They're all black with green roofs, marked TAXI and often display a sign saying *Livre* (free) or *Ocupado* (in service). Rates within Funchal are set according to a government tariff and are remarkably low; for trips outside the city you ought to check in advance with the driver. From the airport to Funchal, for example, the cost is around 500 escudos (£4/US$7.50) while a whole day's touring might cost 2,500 escudos. The customary tip is around 10 15%.

Buses. Whether privately run or state-controlled, the buses (*autocarros*) provide a cheap and reliable service, though mainly aimed at the locals (i.e. buses in Funchal in the mornings, out again in the evenings, with fewer buses running on Sundays). Funchal's Tourist Office can provide a detailed up to date timetable but for some of the more interesting routes see below. Stops are usually marked *Paragen de Autocarro* and you can board a bus anywhere along the route by sticking out a hand. You pay either the bus conductor or at the kiosk at the departure point. On holidays and market days (Friday and Saturday) it's wise to board the bus at the departure point or else forget about your trip: the buses are very crowded then and it can be a chicken-on-the-lap affair. Smoking in buses is not allowed.

Funchal to	**Bus No.**	**Bus leaves from**
Agua de Pena	23	Av. do Mar
Airport (Sta Cruz)	9	Dom Carlos I
Boaventura	6	Av. do Mar
Boaventura	103	Rua do Conselheiro
Cabo Girão	154	Av. do Mar
Calheta	107	Av. do Mar
Camacha	29	Largo do Pelourinho

Câmara de Lobos	1,4,6,7,27,96, 107,154	Av. do Mar
Caniçal & Caniço	113	Av. do Mar
Curral das Freiras	81	Av. do Mar
Estreito de Câmara de Lobos	4,6,7,96	Av. do Mar
Faial	53	Av. do Mar
Faial	103	Rua do Conselheiro
Jardim Botánico	135	Av. do Mar
Machico	23,113	Av. do Mar
Matur	23	Av. do Mar
Monte	31, 106	Av. do Mar
Monte	103	Rua do Conselheiro
Pico dos Barcelos	50	Av. do Mar
Poiso	103	Rua do Conselheiro
Ponta do Pargo	107	Av. do Mar
Ponta do Sol	4	Av. do Mar
Ribeira Brava	4,6,7	Av. do Mar
Ribeiro Frio	103	Rua do Conselheiro
Santa Cruz (airport)	9	Dom Carlos I
Santa Cruz	23,113	Av. do Mar
Santana	103	Rua do Conselheiro
Santo da Serra	77	Largo do Pelourinho
São Gonçalo	113	Av. do Mar
São Jorge	103	Rua do Conselheiro
São Vicente	6	Av. do Mar
Serra de Agua	6	Av. do Mar

Note that to reach *Porto do Moniz* and *Seixal* on the north-west coast, you should take the No. 6 bus from Funchal (Av. do Mar) to São Vicente, then catch the No. 150.

Boats. Quite the best way to see Madeira's splendid coastline is to take a boat. Funchal's Tourist Office will provide details of how to hire privately or you can join a boat trip, through one of several agencies. Two agencies have offices on the Cais (the little quay on the Avenida do Mar); they offer day trips – for example, round the east coast to Praia (cost about 660 escudos per person) – afternoon trips (e.g. to Cabo Girão or as far west as Ponta do Sol) and night-time excursions around Funchal Harbour ('with folklore').

Walking. Many people come to Madeira specifically for walking holidays. Even if you are less than enthusiastic about hiking and rambling,

you'll soon discover the particular pleasures of walking on this island. Funchal itself is such a marvellous place to explore on foot that other means of transport can often be forgotten (but do wear comfortable flat shoes or the cobbled streets may cause a turned ankle). And outside Funchal the magnificant countryside is best appreciated by those who leave buses and motorcars behind them. Many of the country walks follow the *levadas*, the narrow channels so ingeniously distributing water across the island, which provide paths through even the otherwise inaccessible peaks. Some *levadas* can be slippery, steep and giddy mak ing, with sheer drops down the mountainside, but many are easy enough to follow and all are rich in flowery beauty and peace.

To anyone intending to take a walk in Madeira, I strongly recommend a small book widely available in Madeira and in bookshops back home: *Landscapes of Madeira* (see Bibliography); it is not only very informative about the *levada* system, it also describes particular routes – with sensible warnings about what to wear in case the mist descends – and picnic spots that even the car bound can reach, all with a wealth of detail.

3 Where to Stay

Hotels and Boarding Houses in Madeira, p182

Madeira, it is said, has the highest ratio of 4 and 5-star hotels of any holiday area in Europe but it also has a good supply of moderate and inexpensive boarding houses and self-catering accommodation. Whether you're after luxury or plain bed-and-breakfast, there is a plentiful choice.

Most of the holiday accommodation is centred in and around Funchal, especially to the west of town, and in the Baia de Zarco area around Machico and Agua de Pena, with some secluded tourist developments along the south-east coast such as Inter-Atlas, Reis Magos and Matur. Outside these areas what accommodation exists tends to be of the very simplest sort.

As in continental Portugal, Madeira's hotels and boarding houses are graded by government inspectors according to what facilities are provided; 5 stars denote luxury, 1 star is basic. You can expect a private bathroom (toilet, bath and/or shower) in all 5, 4 and 3-star establishments; maybe just a shower room in 2-star places, and shared conveniences in the 1-star boarding houses. Suites are available in all the luxury hotels; some of the simpler places can cram whole families into one room. Almost all the big hotels have private swimming pools and tennis courts, plus hairdressers, boutiques, florists and all the usual paraphernalia, whereas a humble 1-star boarding house can offer no more than a room with an 'interesting' view.

The government-run inns (*pousadas*) familar to many visitors to mainland Portugal currently number only one or two in Madeira, notably at Serra de Agua, a splendid site high in the mountains in the centre of the island. Boarding houses (*pensões*, the singular is *pensão*) are often friendly, family-run establishments with moderate prices; these

too are graded by the star system, most of them fitting the 2- or 3-star categories. Some of the *pensões* are purely residential and do not offer meals other than breakfast, but this is no problem thanks to the abundance and variety of restaurants.

In addition to ordinary hotels, there are apartment hotels (*hotéis apartamentos*) which offer a choice of either normal hotel facilities or accommodation only; visitors opting for the latter can enjoy the usual facilities (pool, tennis courts, nightclubs etc.) or even the hotel restaurant, but if they prefer self-catering they invariably find their every need supplied by local supermarkets, often within the same hotel complex.

Most apartment hotels are on the western outskirts of the capital towards Câmara de Lobos, or around the modern tourist developments along the south-east coast. Here too is where you find most of the villas and apartments, with all the requisite pleasures on tap – sporting facilities, nightlife, shops, restaurants and bars. The two main developments are at Matur and Reis Magos.

Camping in Madeira is not on; the terrain is simply not suited to campsites. There are no official campsites, but if you're still determined to raise a tent, ask first at the Tourist Office; they'll try to dissuade you, then maybe point you towards the island of Ponto Santo.

Prices for accommodation naturally depend on what you want and where you're staying: Reid's Hotel, for example, offers the ultimate in comfort and luxury and such pleasures never come cheap. But a moderate 3-star hotel room for two wanting only bed and breakfast costs around 1500 escudos a night (£12/US$21) inclusive of the 15% service charge and 3% tourist tax. More basic accommodation can cost from as little as 400 escudos a night in a 2-star *pensão.*

Booking in advance is recommended, particularly during the summer months and at Christmas/New Year when Funchal's festivities attract numerous visitors. The constant sunshine and warmth draws people to Madeira every month of the year; the 'high season' is officially winter for the luxury hotels, when wealthy Northerners come to escape the cold at home, but accommodation in Madeira is often filled all year round, much to the envy of many European hoteliers.

The list of hotels below is just a selection. The Tourist Office in Funchal can provide further information. The star system is self explanatory, but AP stands for apartment hotels and HR stands for residential places (i.e. no restaurant meals provided except breakfast).

Hotels and Boarding Houses

Funchal

5 Reid's Hotel, Estrada Monumental 139 (23 000). Class and comfort in the best traditions: gleaming wood and marble and mirrors, wickerwork armchairs on the terrace, chintz-covered armchairs in the salons, fine china, snowy linen and silver cutlery in the dining room, 168 elegant bedrooms, 15 suites, 2 large swimming pools and a private bathing jetty reached by a lift down through the cliffs. The view is superb, the gardens magnificent, and the spacious airy colonial atmosphere – all go to make this one of the world's most famous hotels.

5 Casino Park Hotel, Casino Park (33 111). The newest luxury hotel in Madeira, less than 10 minutes' walk from the centre. Spendidly situated overlooking the harbour, every room has superb views and elegant modern furnishings. Every conceivable service is on offer, from the Casino and Zodiaco (nightclub) to a Cine-Theatre and special facilities for children.

5 Savoy Hotel, Avenida do Infante (22 031). All the usual luxuries plus sea-level swimming pools, water-skiing facilities, pretty gardens and fine views.

5 Sheaton Hotel, Largo António Nobre (31 031). An attractive modern hotel in a splendid situation, across the ravine of Ribeira Seco from Reid's and overlooking the sea.

5 Madeira Palácio, Estrada Monumental (30 001). Rather far out of Funchal but again in a marvellous position over the sea, and a private bus runs residents to and from the city.

4 Girassol, Estrada Monumental (29 281)

4 Quinta do Sol, Rua Dr Pita 6 (31 151)

4 Vila Ramos, Azinhaga da Casa Branca 7 (31 181)

4 Nova Avenida, Rua do Favila 17 (21 143)

4 Santa Isabel, Avenida do Infante (23 111). Central, attractive, has roof-top swimming pool.

4 Duas Torres (AP), Estrada Monumental 239 (30 061)

4 Quinta Penha da França (HR), Rua da Penha da França 2 (29 080). Charming little hotel in a beautiful old house above the harbour, with sea-water swimming pool amid pretty gardens.

4 Albergaria Catedral (HR), Rua do Aljube 13 (30 091).

4 Pensão Monte Rosa (HR), Rua de João Tavira 31 (29 091)

4 Pensão Greco (HR), Rua do Carmo 16 (30 081)

3 Hotel do Carmo, Travessa do Rego 10 (29 001)

3 Orquidea, Rua dos Netos 71 (25 091). Has roof top sun terrace and very friendly service.
3 Monte Carlo, Calçada da Saúde 10 (26 131). Small and friendly, a bit of an uphill climb from the centre.
3 Santa Maria, Rua João de Deus 26 (25 271). Central, attractive, with roof-top swimming pool.
3 America (AP), Caminho do Amparo (30 161). Way out of town, set among banana plantations.
3 Lido-Sol (AP), Estrada Monumental 318 (29 006). Smallish, modern attractive; west of town on the way to Câmara de Lobos.
3 Do Mar (AP), Estrada Monumental (31 001).
3 Santa Luzia (AP), Rua Pedro José de Ornelas 33-c (32 035). Small, friendly and central.
3 Buganvília (AP), Caminho Velho da Ajuda (31 015)
3 Estrelicia (AP), Caminho Velho da Ajuda (31 131)
3 Mimosa (AP), Caminho Velho da Ajuda (31 021). Like the two above, on the western outskirts, high above town.
3 Gorgulho (AP), Rua do Gorgulho (30 111)
3 Madeira (HR), Rua Ivens 21 (30 071)
3 Pensão Colombo (HR), Rua da Carreira 182 (25 251)
3 Pensão Monumental (HR), Estrada Monumental 306 (26 117). Rather far out but small and friendly.
3 Pensão Santa Clara (HR), Calçada do Pico 16-B (24 194)
3 Pensão Tres Bandeiras (HR), Rua do Aljube 17 (25 221)
3 Pensão Avenida (HR), Rua do Aljube 49 (23 043). By the Cathedral (above a chemist); small, simple, noisy but friendly.
3 Pensão Phelps (HR), Largo do Phelps 4 (25 215). Central, very comfortable and friendly service.
3 Pensão Vila Lido, Rua do Gorgulho 17 (21 100). Small but most attractive; near the Lido.
2 Hotel Miramar, Estrada Monumental 186-A (21 141). Almost opposite Reid's, an attractive old house.
2 Hotel Reno (AP), Rua das Pretas 15 (26 125)
2 Pensão Astoria, Rua João Gago 10-3 (23 820)

Agua de Pena/Matur

5 Pensão Galomar (HR), Caniço de Baixo (932 220)
4 Hotel Inter-Atlas (AP), Quinta Garajau (932 421). A smaller tourist complex than at Matur but with the same facilities, and closer to both Funchal and the coast.
4 Conjunto Turistico Reis Magos, Caniço de Baixo (932 219). Much

smaller than the above but with usual amenities and well situated by the sea.

Machico

4 Hotel Dom Pedro (54 450). Modern hotel beautifully situated by the sea with superb views all around and excellent facilities including watersports. About 45 minutes' drive from Funchal.

Porto do Moniz

2 Pensão Fernandes (74 147). Often closes in winter.
2 Pensão Lar de Baia (74 106). Also closes in winter.

Santa Cruz (near airport))

2 Pensão Matos, Ribeirinho 5 (52 161)

Serra de Agua

2 Pousada dos Vinháticos (62344). State-owned inn; tiny and very simple, an excellent base for walks or simply for breathing the pure mountain air (closed for rebuilding in 1981; make reservations through tourist office).

For accommodation in Porto Santo island, see Chapter 8.

4 Wining, Dining and Nightlife

Eating Out, p185 Wine, p187 Nightlife, p191

Eating Out

Hotel restaurants in Madeira, just as everywhere else in the world, tend to offer what they call 'international cuisine': in other words, they have to cater for everybody's tastes. The food they serve is consequently rather bland, though one notable exception is at Reid's Hotel where guests and outsiders can enjoy really excellent cuisine. For those who are more adventurous there is a superb variety of restaurants to choose from in and around Funchal. Like hotels, restaurants throughout Portugal are government-inspected and categorized, though the four categories – luxury, first-class, second and third class – basically reflect the prices that each place is allowed to charge. Some of the best food to be had in Madeira is served in the simplest surroundings; bare formica-topped tables and rickety chairs seems only to emphasize the excellence of what you're eating. But there are plenty of places with 'typical' decor, and some that reach the higest degree of luxury; if it's ambience you want, you have a choice. (Note, however, that many restaurants specialize in *either* meat *or* fish.)

Meal times are more in accordance with British expectations and tend to be earlier than in the Canary Islands. Generally speaking, breakfast is between 7.30 and 9.30 am, lunch is around 12.30 to 2.30 pm and dinner at 7-9 pm, though many restaurants do stay open later (the Rotunda and

São Pedro in Funchal both stay open till 2 or 3 in the morning). While most places are open all week, some close for one day a week (these are noted in the list below). One or two places offer a take-away service, especially popular among self-caterers in apartment hotels and holiday villas; these include the Lido Sol (Estrada Monumental 318) on the western outskirts of Funchal.

In between meals, there are scores of cafés which serve snacks ranging from tuna-fish sandwiches to light grills, and almost every bar will offer titbits of some variety, or you can go to a *pastelaria* for cakes and pastries with your morning coffee or afternoon tea. Tea – it's a constant reminder of the Britishness of this island, though it's not quite like back home; there even exist one or two delightful *casas de chá* (tea houses) and tea on the terrace at Reid's Hotel is a real treat.

Cuisine. The hallmarks of cuisine in Madeira are freshness and simplicity. Vegetables, fruit, fish and especially meat (frozen meat is despised by the locals), virtually everything on the menu is produced on the island or caught off its shores. This is the secret: fresh food and simple preparation. The Madeirans are not sophisticated cooks; they don't usually go in for fancy sauces or elaborate haute cuisine, just plain good food of memorable quality and flavour.

Of the great variety of regional dishes, one that specially delights every non-vegetarian is *espetada*. Almost every restaurant table has a puzzling little hole in the middle; it's not to let wine drip through, it's to hold a metal stand some 3 ft high with hooks at the top. The waiter comes bustling in and hangs your *espetada* from the hook, a huge skewer of lean meat marinated in secret ingredients and cooked over laurel log fires. The meat juices drip onto a plate of homemade bread (*bolo do caco*) which you eat with the meat, sometimes with a plateful of salad on the side. Two excellent places to try *espetada* are A Seta in Funchal and Pastelaria (it used to be just a cake shop) Santo António in Estreito de Cámara de Lobos.

Other meat and poultry specialities include *carne de vinho e alho* (pork in wine and garlic), *arroz de frango* (chicken with rice, white wine and garlic), *cozido à portuguesa* (beef/pork stew) and *coelho assado* (roast rabbit). *Bife* by itself means steak, often big enough for two, and a *costeleta* (chop) can be the size of a British joint.

As an island, Madeira naturally enjoys a wide variety of fresh fish dishes, though sea-food is not plentiful thanks to the lack of a shallow coastline. In fact, fish is far more commonly served than meat, and the range of local specialities is enormous. Grilled, fried, poached, casseroled, even soufflé-ed, the different sort of fish include *bacalhau* (cod),

cavala (mackerel), *dourada* (sea bass), *pescada* (hake), *salmonete* (red mullet), *choupa* (black sea bream), *garoupa* (perch), *truta* (trout, from the Ribeiro Frio) and the three particular specialities: *atum* (tuna), *espadarte* (swordfish) and *espada* (scabbard fish). The *espada* is unfamiliar to many visitors and at first sight (in the market or on the quayside perhaps) it is distinctly off-putting, black, sharp-toothed and ugly. But it is also delicious, no matter how it's served.

Other regional items on the menu include the soups: *açorda* (bread soup, more appetizing than it sounds), *canja* (it has a minty flavour), *caldeirada* (fish soup), *caldo verde* (made with cabbages and potatoes), and *sopa de tomate e cebola* (tomato and onion soup). Also well worth trying are sweet potatoes (*inhames*) and deep fried cubes of maize (*milho frito*), often served with *espetada*. Apart from salads, green vegetables are infrequently served; most dishes come with non-typical 'french fries' but sometimes also adorned with peas, beans or asparagus for example. Garlic by the way is common, though seldom excessive.

Dessert usually means fresh fruit – mouthwatering pineapple, strawberries, melon or figs, perhaps, all local produce and sometimes served in sweet Madeira wine or brandy. The interesting sounding *Pudim Madeira* is ordinary caramel flan in Madeira wine, while another speciality is *bolo de mel*, a rich sweet honey cake.

Although tea is widely available, the Madeirans do like their coffee. It comes in such a variety of ways that a word or two of explanation is necessary. Coffee with milk in a large cup is *uma chinesa* (literally 'a chinese lady') or *café com leite*; in a glass it is *um galão* (a gallon) or *um meio galão* (a half gallon); in a small cup it is *um garoto* ('an urchin'). Black coffee is simply *um café* or *um café grande* if served in a big cup, *um bica* ('a spout') in a small cup – the latter being especially favoured among the locals. Instant coffee is also available (ask for *um nescafé*) as is the decaffeinated sort.

Wine

The fortified wine known simply as madeira is usually drunk as an aperitif or as a dessert wine. The best way to get to know the different varieties is to visit Funchal's numerous wine lodges and enjoy a free wine-tasting session. Briefly, there are four or five main types. Malmsey or *Malvasia* is the most familiar to British palates; sweet, rich and luscious, vintage Malmsey in particular is a drink for the connoisseur. *Boal* is medium-sweet, a rich topaz colour, and very popular. *Tinta* (not

to be confused with *vinho tinto*, any red wine) is another medium-sweet madeira, best appreciated when less than two years old as it tends to lose its bouquet. *Verdelho* is slightly less sweet, amber-coloured, with a special aromatic flavour, also very popular. *Sercial* is often described as dry but madeira is never really dry in the way that a sherry can be; it is nevertheless the driest of madeiras. Ranging in colour from pale gold to warm amber, it has a very pleasing slightly sharp first taste, which leads to it being considered a fine aperitif. It also tends to be more expensive, partly because it requires longer in which to mature.

After you've tasted the wines, you find it easier to get your tongue around those names: *Malvasia* – mahl vah-ZEE-er; *Boal* – boo-AHL; *Tinta* – TEEN-ter; *Verdelho* – vair-DAY-lyoo; *Sercial* – seersh-ee-AHL.

Madeira also produces her own tablewines, rich red and fruity (try for example the house wines at the Casa de Chá do Faial; the plain label *13½* indicates its potency) though the majority come from Portugal and the rest of the Continent. The Portuguese wines need little introduction; but one highly recommended *vinho tinto* from the region of Alentejo is *Reguengos de Monsaraz*, perfect to drink with your *espetada*.

Other Madeiran specialities in the drinks line include liqueurs made from bananas, oranges or passionfruit, *jinja* (cherry brandy) and *aguardente*, a ferocious distillation of fruit or just plain sugar. And then there's *ponche*, a killer cocktail of rum made from pure sugarcane, lemon and honey, particularly popular among the fishermen of Câmara de Lobos. The best place to try it is at the Restaurante Vasco da Gama in Câmara de Lobos, where Noé Teixeira (he also happens to be the local cockroach exterminator) will mix you a glass, warn you of the consequences, and offer a little appetizer, *lengua de gata* (literally 'cats's tongue') which tastes a bit fishy. It is. It's shark.

International brands of whisky, gin and other spirits are on sale everywhere, but expensive; lager-type beer is good (try *Coral*, the local one) or for a refreshing change there is passionfruit juice, *maracujá*. Mineral water too is widely available; one local brand is *Agua de São Vicente*.

Restaurants in Madeira. The following list is merely a selection; the tourist office in Funchal will give you a booklet of dozens more. E – expensive. M – moderate. I – inexpensive.

FUNCHAL

E Reid's Grill (in hotel), Estrada Monumental 139 (23 001) Excellent food in elegant surroundings.

E Vicerei Grill, Madeira Palácio Hotel, Estrada Monumental (30 001)
E Fleur de Lys, Savoy Hotel, Avenida do Infante (22 031)
E Casino Park Hotel, Avenida de Infante (33 111)
E O Churrasco, Sheraton Hotel, Largo António Nobre (31 031)
E Caravela, Avenida do Mar 15-3 (28 464)
M Apolo, Rua António José de Almeida 21 (20 099)
M Café Berlim, Estrada Monumental 219 (26 476). Good for snacks and tea.
M Carochina, Rua de São Francisco 2-A (23 695). Closed Sundays.
M Chafariz, Rua do Estanho Velho 1/3 (20 761)
M Country Club, Rua Dr Pita 10 (26 108). You don't have to be a member.
M Doca do Cavacas, Praia das Conservas (30 147). Closed Mondays, won't serve you after 9.30 pm. Small and rustic, specialize in seafood; their stewed octopus is delicious. Very hard to find: take the Estrada Monumental west out of Funchal, then about ¾ mile past the Rua Gorgulho turn left down a bumpy track through banana plantations to the fish factory, park the car there and walk down the uneven cobbled steps.
M O Espadarte, Estrada da Boa Nova 5 (34 091). Closed Mondays; typical dishes include swordfish speciality.
M Estrela do Mar, Largo do Corpo Santo 1/7 (28 255). Seafood a speciality.
M Flor, Rua das Queimadas de Baixo 3 (32 284)
M Gavinas, Rua do Gorgulho (26 908). One of the best fish restaurants; a bit out of-the-way, west from Funchal and down a bumpy track to the sea; very plain in decor but serves great food.

M Golfinho, Largo do Corpo Santo 21 (26 774). Closed Sundays; seafood specialists, luxurious marine decor.
M Kontiki, Rua do Favila 9 (28 737)
M Lagar, Rua de São Francisco 18 (31 683). Closed Mondays; regional dishes, rustic decor and 'folklorico' entertainment.
M Leão Vermelho/Red Lion, Rua do Favila 4 (22 370)
M Lido Sol, Estrada Monumental 318 (good international cuisine; take-away service)
M Parreira, Caminho da Penteada (28 418)
M Pátio, Rua da Carreira 47 (22,187). As the name suggests, it has a central patio; very pretty – and the food is good too.
M Rotunda, Rua Serpa Pinto (29 634)
M São Pedro, Rua São Predro 2 (22 217)
M Seta, Estrada do Livramento 80 (20 306). One of the best for

regional food, good atmosphere; some 2 miles from centre but worth the climb.

I Brisa, Estrada Dr João Abel de Freitas 104 (29 293). Closed Tuesdays.

I Barcelos A Noite, Pico dos Barcelos (27 773). Lively, with regional food; near the Pico dos Barcelos Mirador – marvellous views at night.

I Dragão Vermelho, Rua da Carreira 54 (31 306)

I Gruta, Estrada da Pontinha (30 453). Tucked into cave overlooking harbour.

I Londres, Rua da Carreira 64-A (31 329). Closed Sundays; small, noisy, popular with the young.

CALHETA

I Estrela (72 145)

CAMACHA

I José Nóbrega (922 126)

I Relógio (922 114)

CAMARA DE LOBOS

M Coral (942 469)

I Ribamar (942 213)

I Vasco da Gama (941 431)

CAMARA DE LOBOS, ESTREITO DE

M Bar Viola (942 640); good food, good wine, no frills.

I Capoeira (942 226)

I Pastelaria Sto António (942 439); plain decor but good food including *espetada.*

CANIÇO

E Jardim do Sol, Sitio do Livramento (932 123)

M Boieiro, Figueirinhas (932 132); a *boieiro* is a man who leads an ox-cart and the decor is appropriate: tables set in genuine old ox-carts beneath canopies; excellent food and wine.

I Girassol, Vargem (932 29)

FAIAL

M Casa de Chá de Faial, Lombo do Baixo (57 223); closed Saturdays. A delightful place in a splendid setting serving excellent lunches and teas (the name means 'Faial Tea House') but not dinners; ideally situated as a stop-off during a tour of the island – but you may have to book, it's very popular.

AGUA DE PENA/MATUR

E Atlantis Grill, in hotel (54 401)

E Matur (54 311)

M Luigi (54 264). Italian cooking.

M O Cacto (54 207). Closed Mondays.
MACHICO
M Facho (54 386). Good for snacks and tea.
M Mercado Velho (54 370). Seafood a speciality.
I O Tunel (54 459)
PORTO DA CRUZ
I Penha d'Ave (56 127). Closed Tuesdays.
PORTO MONIZ
M Cachalote (74 180)
I Pérola (74 168)
RIBEIRA BRAVA
I I Parada (62 273)
SÃO JORGE
M Cabana (57 291)
SÃO VICENTE
M Galeão (64 161). Good regional cooking.
SEIXAL
M Aquário (64 196)

Nightlife

Whether you're a gambler, a disco-dancer, a folk-music fan or a concert-goer, there's plenty going on in Funchal at night. Outside the capital you have to rely mostly on hotels, which everywhere provide cabarets, nightclubs, folkdancing and the like.

Gambling. Funchal's Casino, part of the Casino Park Hotel Complex above the Santa Catarina Park and overlooking the harbour, is a dramatically beautiful building designed by Oscar Niemeyer, the architect of Brasilia. Opened in 1979, it has rapidly become one of Madeira's major attractions, offering roulette tables (French and American varieties), blackjack and crap tables, chemin-de-fer for the elite and slot machines for the hoi-polloi (open from 4 pm to 3 am). Visitors should take their passports and gentlemen are requested to wear jacket and tie after 10 pm.

Nightclubs and Discothèques. Most of the big hotels have their own *boites* or nightclubs with live music catering for all tastes; some of the best are listed below.
(F – in Funchal; M – outside Funchal)

F Zodiaco, Casino Park Hotel, Avenida do Infante
F Galaxia, Savoy Hotel, Avenida do Infante
F The 1418 Club, Madeira Palácio Hotel, Estrada Monumental
M Madeira, Hotel Atlantis, Agua de Pena/Machico
M Piccadilly, Hotel Dom Pedro, Machico
M Zarco, Matur Villa Complex, Agua de Pena
M Reis Magos, at the Reis Magos Tourist Village, Caniço de Baixo.

Among Funchal's discotheques, the newest (opened '81) and most popular is Vespas, with the very latest in modern music and attractive yellow-and-black decor (*vespas* means 'wasps', a nickname for the two young brothers who own the place). It overlooks the beautiful Ribeira Seco ravine, floodlit at night, on the corner of the main road just before Reid's Hotel. It's membership-only for the Madeirans but foreigners are welcome for free: you pay only for your drinks (closed on Mondays).

Other popular disothèques in Funchal include Dois HH or Heaven and Hell (Rua da Alfândega 27), a bar-disco with late hours, and Lord (Travessa da Praça 3). Less popular for some reason is Barbarella (Estrada Monumental 186).

Bars and Pubs. Yes – pubs. Among the many drinking establishments in Funchal are several that can truly be called pubs in the British sense. One of the most attractive is The Prince Albert (Rua Imperatriz Dona Amelia 86, off the Avenida do Infante, near the Savoy Hotel); it's an authentic Victorian pub literally transported from England, plush seating, beer pumps, welcoming gloom and all. Another popular pub is The King (Centro Commercial São Pedro). Near The Prince Albert is Joe's Bar, down an alleyway behind the Quinta Penha da França, a comfortable, friendly new place with a garden. Other lively attractive bars include Canape (Rua Dom Carlos I), The Naughty Pigeon or Pombo Mariola and the Bar Inglês (both in the Rua Imperatriz Dona Amelia). Even non drinkers can enjoy an evening at the Taverna Real (Rua da Cadeia Velha, closed Sundays), a restaurant bar with Viennese singing.

Fados and Folklore. A *fado* is a Portuguese song about fate or destiny characterized by soulful lyrics and guitar music: it's not really typical of Madeira but many people find it attractive and tourists flock to the special *fado* houses such as Bar Marcelino (Travessa das Torres 22), a bar-cum-restaurant, or the Casa Portuguesa (Largo do Corpo Santo 2), both in the old part of town.

Specifically Madeiran music is confined to accompaniment for the dance groups that grace local festivals or tour the hotels to put on regular shows for the tourist. For details of where and when to see them, ask at the Tourist Office.

Theatre/Concerts/Cinema. Funchal's theatre, the Teatro Municipal (in Avenida Arriaga), is a handsome building that houses a variety of events, including ballet and classical music. Concerts and other events are often scheduled at short notice, so check with the Tourist Office to see what's on. Of special interest to visitors are the regular film shows in the theatre (usually starting about noon) about the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo. As for cinemas, there are several in Funchal: Cine Casino (in the Casino Park Hotel Complex, Avenida do Infante), Cine Parque (Rua Ivens), Cine Santa Maria (Rua Dom Carlos I), João Jardim (Rua da Carreira), one in Machico (Rua Ribeirinho) and one in Ponta do Sol (Livramento). Film shows are also provided by many hotels.

5 Miscellanea

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Money

The unit of currency is the Portuguese escudo, divided into 100 centavos. The symbol for the escudo is the same as the American dollar sign – $ – but is is placed *after* the amount in escudos and before the centavos; thus 25$ means 25 escudos while $25 means 25 centavos. Escudos are sometimes called *patacas*, and 1000$ is more commonly called *um conto*. Notes come in denominations of 1,000, 500, 100, 50 and 20 escudo; coins include 25, 10, 5 and 2.5 escudos (all silver) 1 escudo and 50 centavos (copper).

Banks. Banks (*bancos*) are common in Funchal, less so outside the capital. Many hotels and travel agencies offer exchange facilities (but remember that banks give a better rate). Bank hours are generally 9 am to 12 noon and 1-2.30 or 2-3.30 pm, Monday to Friday, closed on Saturday. (Bank holidays are the same as public holidays – see below.) Look out too for the exchange bureaux (*cambios*) which are open longer hours.

Credit Cards. The commoner cards (Access, Barclaycard/Visa, Diners Card, American Express) are widely accepted by hotels, restaurants and travel agencies, even many shops.

Health

No inoculations are presently required for entry into Madeira; the tap water is safe; there are no venomous creatures to avoid. But accidents can happen, and travellers are well advised to seek medical insurance before they leave home. If the worst comes to the worst, Funchal has an excellent new hospital, said to be the best in all Portugal (it's out to the west of town, Avenida Luis Camões). Britain and Portugal have a reciprocal health agreement, entitling British citizens to free medical care – if you can provide the correct bits of paper (for details, ask at your local Department of Health and Social Security).

Problems

Many minor problems can be sorted out by your hotel receptionist or hotel porter or by recourse to the Tourist Office. Medical problems can be taken to chemists or doctors (who advertise in the local Press) or to the hospital (see above).

In the street, look for a policeman with a red armband; he is specifically there to assist tourists. The International Police are based at Travessa dos Reis 10.

Consulates. Certain matters can be dealt with only by the consular officials representing your country – losing a passport for example. Just in case:

British Consulate: Rua da Sé 12, Funchal (21 221)
USA Consulate: Rua Bettencourt 10-2°, Funchal (23 309)

Emergencies. Some useful telephone numbers to know are:

Police 115 (in Porto Santo 82 423)
Hospital 42 111 (in Porto Santo 82 211)
Ambulance 29 115
Fire Service 22 122 (in Porto Santo 82 355; in Machico 54 183)

Tourist Information

The Portuguese National Tourist Office has plenty of help and information to give you before you even leave home. Their head offices

are at the following addresses:
In the UK: New Bond Street House, 1-5 New Bond Street, London W.1 (tel. 01-493 3873)
In the USA: 548 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10036 (tel. 212-354 4403)
or: Suite 500, Palmer House, 17 East Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois 60603 (tel. 312-380 6459)
or: 1 Park Plaza Suite 1305, 3250 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles California 90010. (tel. 213-380 6459)
In Canada: Suite 1150, 1801 McGill College Avenue, Montreal, Quebec Province H3A 2N4 (tel. 514-282 1264)
or: 390 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario M5H 2Y2 tTel. 416 364 8133)
In Madeira, the main Tourist Office (Direćção Regional de Turismo da Madeira) is at the address below:

Avenida Arriaga 18
Funchal
(tel. 29 057)

The staff here are enormously helpful and have reams of literature to hand out, information on sightseeing, sports, shopping, and advice on all manner of problems.

Post Office/Telephone/Telegrams

Funchal's main Post Office is in Avenida Zarco (open 9 am to 10 pm, Monday to Friday, and 9 am to 12 noon on Saturdays). Stamps (*selos*) can be bought upstairs and duty-free packages and telegrams; for dutiable packages the office is downstairs. There are branch offices in most towns (look for the sign *Correio*) and stamps can also be bought at most tobacconist shops.

Postal rates rise almost as fast as inflation, but in 1981 prices were as follows:

(a) – for a postcard (*um postal*); (b) – for a letter (*uma carta*)

	(a)	(b)
To the UK and Europe:	15$00	22$00 (for 20g)
To the USA and other countries	18$50	25$50 (for 5g)

Postboxes come in two varieties: red pillar boxes just like in Britain, or things like litterbins attached on walls and marked CORREIO.

Telephone. Use your hotel phone by all means but be prepared for a whopping surcharge on the bill. It is far cheaper to use the local Post Office (for overseas calls) or one of the street telephones for which you need a supply of 1$00 coins (insert another as soon as the first one drops or you'll be cut off). Funchal's main Post Office has new-style phone booths which take 1$00, 5$00 or 10$00 coins; have plenty of change ready and insert when the light goes on. To make a reverse charges call, ask for *paga pelo destinatario*; for a person to-person call ask for *com preaviso*. Local calls currently cost 3$50 for three minutes; long distance calls (e.g. to Europe and the UK) about 20$00 for every $7\frac{1}{2}$ seconds.

Telegrams. To send *um telegrama* over the phone, dial 10. In Funchal you can send telegrams not only from the Post Office but from the offices of Marconi Cable Services in Avenida Arriaga (open seven days a week, 9 am to 10 pm).

Hours

Bank hours are noted above. **Shops** are generally open 9 am to 1 pm and 3-7 pm (mornings only on Saturdays). Funchal's **market** is open Monday to Saturday, usually from 7 am to 4 pm but later on Friday afternoon. **Chemists** follow the usual shopping hours, but an emergency night service (and for Sundays) is offered on a rotating basis with details of which shop is 'on duty' on what night contained in a prominently displayed notice.

The **Tourist Office** is open 9 am to 7 pm on weekdays, 9 am to 1 pm only on Sundays. Most **offices** are open 9-12.30 and 2-5.30.

Bars and cafés are virtually never closed (for restaurants see above).

Museums have individual opening hours; see details in text below.

NB: Madeira follows Greenwich Mean Time.

Public Holidays

Madeira's *dias feriadas* are numerous and can catch out the unwary visitor by closing the banks and shops just when they're wanted. In addition to these holidays, there are local festivities, centring on indi-

vidual towns and villages; the Tourist Offices can provide details.

January	New Year's Day
March/April	Good Friday and Easter Monday
25 April	Revolution Day
1 May	Labour Day
10 June	National Day
June	Corpus Christi
15 August	Feast of the Assumption
1 November	All Saint's Day
1 December	Restoration of Independence Day
8 December	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
24-26 December	Christmas

Shopping

Funchal is the main shopping centre, with everything from a fascinating market (best days to go: Friday and Saturday mornings) to department stores with nice old-fashioned service. Outside Funchal, there is less choice; the tourist areas have lots of boutiques while the shops in country villages sell mostly food, hardware and clothing with the occasional postcard and souvenir shops.

Local Specialities. Madeira wine and embroidery will make you want to empty your purse and fill your suitcase. The wine can be sampled and bought at any of the numerous *adegas* (see section on wine above) such as H. M. Borges' wine lodge at Rua 31 de Janeiro 83, or the Madeira Wine Association, Avenida Arriage 28, both in Funchal. Embroidery (*bordados*) show- rooms and shops are just as numerous: Patriciou & Gouveia (Rua do Visconde de Anadia, Funchal) have a good selection. as do Leacock Bordados at Praça do Infante.

Other specialities include wickerwork (*obra de vîmes*) – available everywhere but particularly in Camacha, the centre of the industry – and flowers, armfuls of them carried onto aeroplanes by departing visitors (orchids and strelitzias travel well; you can buy them specially packaged at the airport).

The Mecca for souvenir-hunters is an elegant shop on the first floor of an old house overlooking the Avenida do Mar: Casa do Turista (Rua do

Conselheiro, a little cobbled street off the Avenida Arriaga). They sell everything from delicately embroidered table linen to cheap and cheerful pottery ashtrays, and it is all beautifully displayed among polished antique wood cabinets and vases of fresh flowers.

Food. Self-caterers have no problem finding well stocked modern supermarkets and minimarkets wherever they are staying, with familiar brands beside the local goods. But there's nothing to beat Funchal's main market, the Mercado dos Lavradores to the east of town, facing the Ribeira de João Gomes. The ground floor is a fascinating maze of little stalls surrounding a central open-air courtyard full of flowersellers in their traditional costume; a lower level houses the fish market, while upstairs there are more stalls selling live poultry, more vegetables and fruit, wickerwork articles etc.

Churches

The Portuguese are a Catholic nation, though other religions are tolerated, and Madeira's churches are mainly Roman Catholic. They are also among the most interesting buildings here, with plain exteriors – often whitewashed, with the lava cornerstones and portals left bare – and handsome interiors, perhaps with a gilded reredos and a painted ceiling. The mother church is the Cathedral in Funchal (see text below). For other creeds, Funchal has an Anglican Church (Rua Quebra Costas 22), a Scottish Kirk (Rua do Conselheiro 47), an Evangelical Church (Rua Bartolomeu Dias) and even a Seventh Day Adventists' Temple (Rua Conde do Carvalhal 6).

Sport

Swimming. With only one proper sandy beach to boast of (at Prainha, on the Ponta de São Lourenço), Madeira might seem to be less than ideal for those who like to lie around in swimsuits, though Porto Santo has an enormous white sandy stretch on its southern coast, five miles long and empty for most of the year. However, almost every big hotel has at least one pool, and there are several public pools. In Funchal there is for example the Lido, to the west of town, and the Barreirinha, just around the corner from the prominent Forte de São Tiago. The

tourist complexes all have pools (at Agua de Pena, Machico, Caniço), and on the north coast there is a splendid series of tempting natural rocky pools at Porto do Moniz and Ponta Delgada.

Watersports. Big hotels like Reid's, the Savoy and the Sheraton make arrangements for anyone wanting to go sailing, waterskiing, snorkelling, scuba diving, even windsurfing. The Tourist Office has reams of information, or you can apply to any of the agencies who also make arrangements for boat hire, such as Amigos do Mar (on the Cais, Funchal), Star Travel Service (Avenida Arriaga 23, Funchal), Madeira Seafaris (in the Hotel Dom Pedro, Machico). Star also have a branch in Porto Santo.

Tennis. Again most of the major hotels and apartment hotels have tennis courts, courts, often with professional instructors. These courts are open to anyone but you do have to book in advance. And, as you would expect, the tourist complexes at Matur and Caniço have excellent facilities.

Golf. Apart from the ubiquitous mini-golf, Madeira has only one proper course (18 holes) at Santo da Serra, high in the eastern hills about 4½ miles from Machico. Visitors are welcome, and there is a good clubhouse and with bar and restaurant.

Waling and Hiking. You won't need much encouragement to indulge in some gentle rambling (see above, in section on Getting Around), and if you're a serious walker you have definitely found the right place. The Tourist Office, that fount of all knowledge, have up-to-date information on which walks are in what state, and the Underwoods' book (see Bibliography) will prove invaluable.

Local Sport. The Madeirans, like most Europeans, are mad on football, almost to the exclusion of anything else. The Barreiros stadium is in west Funchal. For details of games and prices, ask at your hotel or at the Tourist Office.

Maps

Although the Tourist Office hand out dozens of maps and town plans, the best and most detailed map of Madeira is published by the Instituto

Geográfico e Cadastral, available at specialist map stores in Britain and America and at many bookshops in Funchal. Another good map with a town plan and lots of useful tourist information is published by Fairey Surveys Ltd in England.

Radio, Television and Press

The radio broadcasts are mainly in Portuguese of course, but there are special tourist broadcasts in English every day, with local information and news from back home (202 metres medium wave; 1484 KHz). Madeira's television aerials receive broadcasts from mainland Portugal and from the Canaries (in Spanish). Some of Portugal's TV programmes originate in Britain or North America and are not dubbed, having subtitles in Portuguese – so you may find yourself watching old favourites without any need to lipread.

In addition, much useful information can be found in *The Madeira Island Bulleting*, a local monthly paper aimed at the visitor; it can be found on most hotel reception desks. It's full of interesting little pieces on Madeira's history, flora and fauna, shopping hints, coming events, restaurants etc.

6 In and Around Funchal

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Funchal

The first impression of Funchal, whether from the air or arriving by sea, is of colour and light: white buildings with red roofs, green mountains and gardens, blue sky and sparkling sea. The city is built around the harbour, rising steeply up the hills behind, the wide avenues crisscrossed with scores of little narrow cobbled lanes. Portuguese colonial architecture with shady patios and elegant verandahs; streets and mosaic-laid pavements edged with palm trees, hibiscus bushes and huge cacti; open-air cafés, noisy traffic, the bustle of commerce and the docks – Funchal is a mixture of Europe and some tropical paradise.

Founded by João Gonçalves Zarco in 1420, Funchal is situated in a wide south-facing bay, protected from the prevailing northerly winds. Four deep river valleys cut through the city, though dry for much of the year; in the west is Ribeira Sêco, a lush green ravine which you have to cross to reach Reid's Hotel; then comes Ribeira de São João and the two Ribeiras de Santa Luzia and de João Gomes, both hidden beneath a dense mass of purple and scarlet bougainvillea trained over the stony river beds.

Now a modern busy city of over 100,000 inhabitants, Funchal's **harbour** is still its most important feature. A long quay, the **Molhe da Pontinha**, provides a safe berth for all the cruise ships and cargo vessels,

Funchal
Funchal Key
A Parque de Sta Catalina
B Praça do Infante
C Jardim São Francisco
D Praça do Município
E Praça de Teatro
1 Cathedral
2 Museu de Arte Sacra
3 Colégio
4 Museu Municipal
5 Convento Sta Clara
6 Quinta das Cruzes
7 English Church
8 Post Office
9 Tourist Office
10 Palácio São Lourenço
11 Old Customs House
12 Market
Rua de São Tiago
Forte de São Tiago
Avenida do Mar
Rua de D. Carlos I
Rua do Carmo
Rua João de Deus
Rua 5 de Outubro
Rua dos Mercos
Rua das Pretas
Avenida Zarco
Rua de Santa Clara
Rua de Carreiras
Rua Dr. Pinto Correia
Forte do Pico
Caminho do Pico
Ribeira de São João
Ribeira de Sta Luzia
Rua de Ivens
Rua de Santa Maria
Rua de Aljube
Rua de Fernão Ornelas
Rua de Santa Quiteria
Rua da Mouraria
Rua do Favila
Rua dos Ilhéus
Avenida do Mar
Jasmineiro
Av. Luis Camoes
Santo António
Maranhas
Hospital
Ribeira Seca
Rua do Dr. Pita
Cliffs
Castelo
Mole de Pescaria
Rua de Pescaria
Rua de Santa Maria
Rua do Favila
Rua dos Ilhéus
Rua do Dr. Pita
Rua de Ivens
Rua de Aljube
Rua de Fernão Ornelas
Rua de Santa Quiteria
Rua da Mouraria
Rua dos Mercos
Rua das Pretas
Rua de Santa Clara
Rua de Carreiras
Rua Dr. Pinto Correia
Rua de São Tiago
Rua de D. Carlos I
Rua do Carmo
Rua João de Deus
Rua 5 de Outubro

its length dominated by a small 19th-century fortress, **Forte da Nossa Senhora da Conçeicão**. At night, the lights on the ships reflecting in the water make a very pretty picture.

Along the waterfront eastward stretches the wide Avenida do Mar, shaded by jacaranda trees that bear a mass of fluffy blue blossoms in spring, with the little **Cais** (municipal quay) where local ferryboats and pleasure boats tie up. Round to the east of town is the **fishing port** and the fish market, a noisy, smelly, interesting place where the boats unload their catches and hoteliers come to haggle for your supper. Just east from here is the prominent **Forte de São Tiago**, jutting into the harbour (constructed in the early 17th century, modified 1767), where the British garrison was stationed in 1801. It's now the home of the local military police, but if you ask nicely they will let you in to explore the ramparts and old cannon emplacements, and to admire the magnificent view of the bay. Nearby and visible from the fort is the **Igreja de Santa Maria Maior** (Church of St Mary Major) in Largo Socorro, with an onion-shaped dome on the belltower and a pretty little house attached where the priest lives. In the church, rebuilt in 1803 after destruction by storms, a shrine honours St James the Less for protecting Madeirans from a 16th-century plague; a local **festival** celebrates the occasion every May Day. Almost opposite the church are the steps down to the Barreirinha public swimming pool.

Heading back into town from the church, between the municipal market and the Avenida do Mar is the **Old Quarter**, near the fishing port. It's a maze of little streets, old houses and seafood restaurants, surrounding a square in which stands the fishermen's chapel, **Capela de Corpo Santo**.

The **Mercado dos Lavradores** (Municipal Market) is a block or two north of here, facing the Ribeira de João Gomes; here you can buy fresh vegetables, meat, fish and poultry, watch the flowersellers pressing huge sprays of orchids and bunches of mimosa on the housewives, taste a delicious hot doughnut (*bola de berlim*) or simply meander among the smells and sights, drinking it all in. It is well worth a visit even if you're not buying (best time to go is on Friday or Saturday mornings, or early afternoon). Continuing north from the market you reach the green square of the **Praça de Tenerife**, on the corner of the Estrada Conde do Carvalhal which leads out to the airport.

Back on the Avenida do Mar, there are two dominant buildings facing out to sea. To the west is the old fort, or **Palácio de São Lourenço**, on the corner of Avenida Zarco. This 16th-century fortress used to be the residence of the governors of Madeira, now taken over by the military and not normally open to the public. On the avenue beside the Palácio

there is an extraordinary sight: one or two pairs of oxen and wooden sledges (*carros de bois*) with canopies stand waiting for tourists to hail them for a slow but surprisingly comfortable traipse through the city streets. The oxen are urged on by a man in white with a boater, and the sledge slides over the cobbles with hardly a bump. Near the Palácio, between the Avenida do Mar and Rua da Alfandega is the old **Customs House** (Alfândega), a 16-century building reconstructed in the 18th century and now declared a national monument (open to the public every day except Sunday, 9 am – 12 noon and 2-5 pm).

Just up from the Alfândega, past the pavement cafés on Avenida António José de Almeida, is the **Sé**, Funchal's Cathedral. Built between 1485 and 1514, the architectural style is 'Manueline', after the then King of Portugal, Manuel I, with a plain exterior and a magnificent interior. Outside, the walls are partly whitewashed, except for the corner stones and façade which display the local dark basalt stone of which the Cathedral was constructed. The square belltower (the original bells were destroyed by De Montluc's pirates) is topped by a little tiled spire. Inside, the towering stone columns support whitwashed arches dividing the aisles and chapels into the form of a Latin cross. The finely carved ceiling of cedarwood inlaid with ivory (often barely discernible in the dimness) is covered in designs of the exotic flora and fauna then being discovered by the early 16th-century Portuguese navigators. The altar and choir are a glowing focal point, gilded, ornate and beautiful; above the altar are a dozen or more 16th-century Flemish paintings, their rich colours catching the light from two stained-glass windows. The **Sacramental Chapel**, off the choir to the right, is a later addition (16th century) continuing the gilded theme.

The façade of the Cathedral faces west along the wide **Avenida Arriaga**, fragrant with jacaranda blossoms in spring. At the crossroads with Avenida Zarco stands a modern statue to the discoverer himself, João Gonçalves Zarco; up Avenida Zarco is the **Junta Geral**, administrative headquarters of the regional government, and, almost facing it, the main **Post Office**. Continuing west along Avenida Arriaga past the northern ramparts of the Palácio de São Lourenço on the left is the **Teatro Municipal**, a handsome 19th century building, scene of a variety of dramatic and musical events. Near the theatre is a fine old house still displaying the original *azulejos*, attractive blue and white wall tiles depicting scenes of traditional Madeiran life; by contrast, the building now is a Toyota car showroom.

On the opposite side of Avenida Arriaga, near the **Tourist Office** at No. 18, is a beautiful public garden, the **Jardim de São Francisco** (or Jardim Municipal). It's a place to relax in, to admire the exotic trees and

flowers or the black swans on a little pond, to sit and have your shoes shined or your photograph taken, to watch the old men huddled over a game of cards or the children playing among the birds.

Still heading west, Avenida Arriaga ends at the **Praça do Infante**, where traffic roars round a circular fountain under the stony eyes of Infante Dom Henriques/Prince Henry the Navigator, a bust of whom stands at the steps up to another park, the **Parque de Santa Catarina**. This large park stretches uphill to the west, along Avenida do Infante, and falls sheer away to the harbour on the south side, with grand views back over the city and out over the bay. Where the steps up from the waterfront enter the park stands a tiny chapel, **Capela de Santa Catarina**, raised by Zarco in 1425 (closed to the public), with a nearby bust of Columbus – Cristovão Colombo, as the Portuguese call him – staring out to sea.

Back at the Cathedral, the busy shopping street Rua João Tavira leads you uphill; a few hundred yards on the right is Rua do Bispo, the street containing the **Museu de Arte Sacra** (Museum of Sacred Art, at No. 21), backing onto the Praça Municipal. Once the Bishop's Palace, the Museum now houses a collection of paintings, statues and other religious articles assembled from churches and private chapels all over the island. There is presently no English catalogue and labelling is inadequate, but the English-speaking guides will tell you who painted St Jeronimo or where the dainty mother-of-pearl scene of the Last Supper came from. Among the most impressive paintings are the 15th and 16th-century Flemish works, brought to Madeira by wealthy merchants in part payment for sugar. Also of interest is a display of photographs depicting many of the treasures before they were restored by art experts in the 1950s and '60s; private estates all over Madeira must have been crammed with fading canvases and wormy wooden statuettes until the experts got their hands on them. (The Museum is open 10-12.30 and 2.30-5 pm on weekdays, 10-12.30 only on Sundays, closed Mondays; entrance fee 20$00.) Also in the Museum building is a modern Art Gallery, with changing exhibitions of Modern art (open same hours as Museum, small extra entry fee).

Beside the Museum, steps lead up into the **Praça do Municipio** (Municipal Square), with the **Camara Municipal** (Town Hall) on the east side, an 18th century palace with a pretty courtyard. Just up from here is the modern **Palácio da Justiça** (Law Courts), between Rua dos Ferreiros and the Ribeira de Santa Luzia. If you follow the Ribeira south on its far side, down Rua 31 de Janeiro, you come to the wine lodge of H. M. Borges, just one of the many places to sample Madeira wine – a perfect way to spend a damp morning!

Back in the Municipal Square, on the north side stands the **Igreja do Colégio** (Collegiate Church), founded in the 17th century. The magnificent baroque interior is well worth a visit. Behind it is the actual College, run by Jesuits until they were expelled during an anti-clerical phase in mid-18th century; during their occupation (1807-14), British troops used the College as a barracks.

Leaving the square and heading west along Rua Pestana until you reach the top of Avenida Zarco, fork right up Rua das Pretas, a narrow cobbled street with some good antique shops near the top. Here, at the narrow crossroads, stands the **Igreja de São Pedro** (Church of St Peter), across the road from another museum, the **Museu Municipal**, in the old Palácio de São Pedro. This building houses a natural history collection and a small aquarium (plus a library, on the first floor). The **Aquario** is on the ground floor (open 9.30 am to 10 pm weekdays, 12-4 pm on Sundays; the entrance fee of 7$50 covers both this and the Museum), providing a glimpse of octopus, turtles and some local marine specimens. On the second floor is the museum itself – rooms full of stuffed animals even a *lobo marino* or monk seal from which the nearby village of Cãmara de Lobos gets its name. (Museum open 9.30-12.30 and 2 5 pm weekdays, 12-4 pm Sundays and holidays; entrance fee as above).

Between the Museum and the Church the winding cobbled street of Calçada de Santa Clara leads you further uphill to the 15th century **Convento de Santa Clara** (Convent of St Clare), founded by two granddaughters of Zarco. The nuns welcome you into the convent (weekday mornings only, 9-12) and will act as guides, chattering sweetly about plans for restoration which soon has you digging into your pocket. The cobwebby atmosphere makes a delightful change after the noisy streets outside as you are led through cloisters and courtyards full of fragrant orange and lemon trees and pots of geraniums and lilies. There are murals and paintings to admire, and one tiny delapidated 15th-century chapel, but the great attraction is the convent church. The original church was founded by Zarco, the first-ever church to be built on the island, and the present building (17th-century) was built on the same site; you can see the tomb of Zarco, his wife and two children to the right of the entrance. The walls are tiled with 300-year old *azulejos* from Lisbon and the ceiling is painted wood in the local style.

Zarco made his home just up from the Convent, on the site where the **Quinta das Cruzes** now stands – an attractive estate and house that has become yet another museum. The Quinta das Cruzes museum comprises a collection of antique furniture (Portuguese, English, Spanish, French), paintings and porcelain. The beautiful gardens contain more exotic floral specimens and an orchid house full of magnificent

blooms as well as a surprising outdoor display of antique architectural fragments: carved stone coats-of-arms, statuary, doorways and windows collected from old houses on the island before demolition. (Check at the Tourist Office for opening hours; the house is presently closed for rebuilding work.)

West along Rua das Cruzes, between the Quinta and the Convent, there is a little *mirador* or viewpoint with a fine panorama of the city below. From here you can see a nearby church with a greenish dome but no spire: this the **Anglican Church**, reached by turning left down Rua de Quebra Costas (it's at No. 22). Built in the 1820s, the church has no spire or belltower because a contemporary Portuguese law forbade such features on any non-Catholic church.

Above and to the west of Rua das Cruzes stands the prominent **Forte do Pico**, an old fortress that is now a radio communications centre.

The Western Outskirts

To reach the western 'hotel quarter' of Funchal, take either the Rua Carvalho Aranjo up from the main quay, or the broad **Avenida do Infante** rising smoothly from the above Praça do Infante between Parque Santa Catarina (see above) and the gardens of the old **Hospital Dona Amélia**, whose entrance is marked by two dragon trees. At the top of the Avenida is the **Casino Park Hotel Complex**: Oscar Niemeyer's stunningly beautiful Casino (opened 1979) shaped like a crown, and the hotel itself set in attractive gardens overlooking the harbour the part was once part of an old estate, the Quinta Vigia, where Queen Adelaide (widow of William IV) stayed, and later the Empress Elizabeth of Austria.

Now the hotels come thick and fast – the Savoy, the Santa Isabel and the Sheraton. Just before the ravine of **Ribeira Seco**, a road up to the right leads to the new **Hospital Distreital**. Across the lush greenery of the ravine, the Rua Dr Pita turns right up towards the football stadium and the pretty residential district of **Barrio das Virtudes** looking back over town.

After the ravine, the Avenida do Infante becomes the **Estrada Monumental**, the main highway leading west out of Funchal to Câmara de Lobos and beyond. To the left of the road, perched on the edge of the ravine is **Reid's Hotel**, set in magnificent gardens overlooking the sea. The gardens are open to anyone and they make a pleasant stroll before taking afternoon tea on the terrace of the hotel.

Still heading west along the Estrada Monumental, you come to the

Rua Gorgulho on the left, leading past the apartment hotel Gorgulho and down to the sea and the **Lido**, a favourite spot with visitors and locals alike for sea-water swimming. From the crossroads on the Estrada Monumental the road off to the right, Caminho Velho da Ajuda, leads to more hotels and to the football stadium again.

Short Excursions from Funchal

Monte. Due north of the city, its prominent white church looking down on Funchal (3 miles away by road), this delightful little village is a 'must' on any visitor's itinerary, set in the green wooded hills 1,800 ft above town. Once a garrison village for the British, in the 19th and 20th centuries it became a popular retreat for wealthy Europeans with many fine *quintas* (estates) in the neighbourhood. In 1921 the exiled Emperor of Austria came here with his wife; he died the following year and is buried in the church.

To reach the church, climb the pathway from the central square up through a beautiful park, overlooking the public gardens where streams trickle among camellias, roses, lilies and ferns. The **Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Monte** (Church of Our Lady of the Mount) has an attractive white façade with tall belltowers on either side; it's an 18th-century building on the site of the original 15th century church dedicated to the island's patroness, Our Lady of the Mount, who is honoured by a major **festival** every 15-16 August, pilgrims coming from all over Madeira to proclaim their reverence. And you can see Emperor Charles IV's tomb in a little chapel to the left of the nave.

Monte's other major attraction is the **toboggan run.** The tobaggans (*carros de cesto*) are wickerwork seats on metal runners which glide over the steep cobbled streets down to Funchal; two men dressed in white with straw hats guide the *carro* from behind as it skids and bumps over the cobbles at ever-increasing speed. Once this was the way that Madeirans transported their produce from the mountains down to the city, skidding and sliding down tracks that were impassable to any other form of transport. It's an exhilarating way to make the descent to Funchal, even if you have left your car behind and must then trudge back uphill (cost: about 500$00 for two).

Terreiro da Luta. North from Monte and only a mile up the EN 103, between pine forests and sweet-smelling eucalyptus, a secondary road to the right leads to Terreiro da Luta, at an altitude of nearly 2,900 ft. Cool and fresh with glimpses of Funchal far below, this is the place where

Madeira remembers those who died in the First World War German submarine attacks. A **statue to Nossa Senhora da Paz** (Our Lady of Peace) stands above the road, with a tiny chapel to one side next to a small café-cum-souvenir shop. The statue (raised 1927) is said to stand on the spot where Our Lady of the Mount (see above, under Monte) once appeared to the people of Madeira. Around the base are heavy chains from ships sunk by the submarines in Funchal harbour.

Pico dos Barcelos. Some 4 miles north-west of Funchal stands the small hillock called Pico dos Barcelos, about 1,000 ft above sea level, with a *mirador* at the top offering fine views all around. To the east is Funchal; to the west Cãmara de Lobos. Silhouetted against the sea is the white church of São Martinho, while nestling a the foot of the mountains to the north is the village of Santo Antonio, the scattering of houses dominated by a large twin-spired church.

Curral das Freiras. North-west from Pico dos Barcelos, about 12 miles from Funchal, this tiny village is set high in the mountains in an extinct volcanic crater, surrounded by impressive rocky peaks. The name means 'Corral of the Nuns' after a group of nuns who sought refuge up here from the Convent of St Clare when French pirates attacked Funchal in 1566. Before the road winds down into the crater, there is a spectacular viewpoint at **Eira do Serrado** (3,300 ft), from where you can see the village far below and the mountain peaks above, including **Pico Grande** (5,400 ft) to your left.

Jardim Botánico. North east out of Funchal, in the hills above the Ribeira de João Gomes, the Botanical Gardens are worth a visit even if you are not a botanist, for the glorious blooms and scents of the flowers and the fine views down over the city (open daily, 10 am-5 pm, admission free). A myriad walkways lead you through flowering trees and giant cacti, terraces of roses and strelitzias, little pools full of waterlilies and fish, fancy aviaries and work-a-day greenhouses. It's beautiful, calm and refreshing – but rather hard to find: follow the east bank of the Ribeira de João Gomes north out of the city towards Camacha, turning left off the main road just after leaving the ravine, then left again up Rua Carlos Azevedo de Menezes.

Quinta do Palheiro Ferreiro. This large private estate, 6 miles east of Funchal (off the EN 102-1 due east of the Jardim Botánico), belongs to the Blandys, one of the prominent British families in Madeira. Visitors are welcome (9.30-12.30, Monday to Friday; small entrance fee) but

you would do well to go first to Blandy Brothers' travel agency on the Avenida do Mar, who will provide instructions on how to get there. Once there were many of these fine *quintas* surrounding villas owned by foreigners who preferred Madeira's tranquillity to the more usual French Riviera; some of them have been split up for hotels now, but others still stand with their air of restrained elegance amid fine parklands. The Blandy estate is particularly fine, another treat for botanists and gardeners, with glorious exotic specimens, butterflies, birds and utter peace.

7 Around the Island

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The South-West Coast

Leaving Funchal behind and heading west, the Estrada Monumental turns into the EN 101, an excellent coastal highway through banana and sugarcane plantations, linking the city with the picturesque fishing port of **Câmara de Lobos** 5 miles away. Painted by Winston Churchill, photographed by thousands of tourists, the little harbour full of gaily painted fishing boats strung with nets hung out to dry is surrounded by a tight-knit cluster of white houses with red tiled roofs, glossy green banana trees and a dozen pretty views. The name means 'Chamber of Seals', *lobos* being monk seals who evidently used to breed in rocky inlets round here. The little chapel by the harbour was originally built in the 15th century, reconstructed in the 1720s.

The main road then turns inland through more banana plantations that gradually give way to vines growing over the terraces above potatoes and beans, up to **Estreito de Câmara de Lobos**, centre of this richest agricultural area of Madeira. The village itself perches high above the road, watched over by a prominent white church inside which there is a collection of ornate chandeliers and a charming example of the local painted wood ceilings. A minor road from Estreito leads up to **Jardim da Serra** ('Garden of the Mountain') at 1,500 ft, where the grapes are grown for *Sercial*, one of the delicious madeiras, and cherries for *Jinja*, a rich

cherry brandy.

Leaving Estreito, the EN 101 continues its winding way uphill and back towards the coast. From time to time you catch glimpses of the high rugged cliffs towering over the sea – and about 3 miles on, a left turn takes you down a minor road towards the clifftops. Where the road ends, among pinetrees and souvenir stalls is **Cabo Girão**, at 1,900 ft claimed to be the second highest seacliff in the world. The name means 'Cape Turning-Point', so called after Zarco turned round here and sailed back to found the city of Funchal. A little *mirador* at the top looks straight down into the clear blue water lapping at the cliff base – it's a breathtaking moment. The views all around are superb, especially looking back towards Câmara de Lobos and beyond to the distant Desertas Islands. A rough track up behind the *mirador* leads to pretty picnic spots among the pines and eucalyptus and sweet chestnut trees, a blaze of yellow broom or blue agapanthus, depending on the season; the air is cooler here and fresher, full of fragrant scents and quiet birdsong.

Back to the highway and turning left, the westward journey continues to **Quinta Grande**, once a Jesuit estate and still a major sugarcane-growing area, then down through **Campanário**, a loose cluster of houses amid richly cultivated land – sugarcane, vines, vegetables, apples and flowers. Every tiny ledge, or *poio*, is carefully tended by manual labour – no point having ploughs when there is only two square yards of earth to till then a drop of four feet to the next ledge of potatoes.

Finally the road descends into **Ribeira Brava**, 19 miles from Funchal. The little town is named after the 'Wild River' which flows down a steep valley to enter the sea here; most of the year it looks pretty tame, but the winter rain can send torrents flooding down between its banks. There's a small shingly beach below a shady esplande, on which stands a tiny 17th-century fort, once a defence against pirates. The church, dedicated to St Benedict, has a little blue-and-white glazed tile steeple; dating from the 16th-century, the church was later rebuilt though retaining some original features inside. The square in front of the church, full of tall plane trees, is laid with black and white cobbles to form a mosaic design.

In Ribeira Brava, a road north up the river's side (EN 104) leads across the mountains to São Vicente in the north coast. It's a marvellous route (described below) but for the moment we're continuing west along the coast.

Some 5½ miles out of Ribeira Brava, there's a left turn off the EN 101 down to **Ponta do Sol**, a small town and district capital. There is another little shingle beach, a 15th-century church with a fine painted ceiling and splendid views of the dramatic coastline. About a mile to the east, a cobbled lane leads to **Lombada da Ponta do Sol**, where the old house

was the home of João Esmeraldo who owned extensive sugarcane plantations around Ponta do Sol and who was a friend of Columbus. The nearby chapel, Capela de São João, was built in 1720 on the site of Esmeraldo's original family chapel; inside it is richly decorated with gilded baroque altars and beautiful panels of *azulejos*.

Back on the EN 101, heading for Calheta, the road passes through **Canhas**, a nondescript village, to a point 3½ miles from the Ponta do Sol turn-off; here the road to the right leads up to Paúl da Serra and the western highlands (see below). Another 2 miles on there is a *mirador* to the left, looking straight down onto **Madalena do Mar**, a tiny village at the mouth of the Ribeira Madalena. Now there comes a decision: whether to follow the EN 101 as it twists and turns through the little inland villages of **Arco da Calheta**, **Loreto** and **Florenças** et al, or whether to branch off to the left on the coastal road to Calheta. The villages have nothing special to recommend them save the gentle green of the terraces and plantations, and the coastal road is more direct.

Calheta is a small town and port amid a major wine growing district. Its interesting 17th-century church has a Moorish-style ceiling, like the Sé in Funchal. It is the focal point of the annual **festival** (7 September) which occurs at the start of the grape harvest. From Calheta, a very twisty road leads back up to rejoin the EN 101. At **Estreito da Calheta**, another road off to the left leads to **Jardim do Mar** ('Garden of the Sea'), a village perched on the summit of high cliffs. The inland route continues through **Prazeres**, past the turning to **Raposeira** (fine views down over the coast round Paúl do Mar), to the EN 101-7 road which winds down to the coast again at **Paúl do Mar**, a tiny fishing port on a narrow landslip with shingle beaches.

Finally the long twisting drive west ends at **Ponta do Pargo**, about 50 miles by road from Funchal. The town gets its name from the westernmost headland, 'Dolphin Point', dominated by a lighthouse and with views in all directions of the Atlantic Ocean. The EN 101 continues north through green hilly countryside full of terraces, woods and flowers – pretty, but less interesting than the southern panoramas – to **Santa** (short for Santa Maria Madalena) and **Porto do Moniz**, the northernmost village of the island (see below).

The North-West Coast

The dramatic north coast of Madeira is a major tourist attraction – for itself rather than for any individual town or village. The small port of

Porto do Moniz huddles on a shelf above the rocky north-western tip of the island, away from the battering seas raised by predominant northerly winds. The road from Santa (see above) descends a steep cliffside into the town via hairpin bends and splendid views of the few red-roofed houses and little church set among a patchwork of fields. The fields – here as elsewhere along this exposed coast – are surrounded by dried-broom fences to protect the crops. Black lava rocks below are constantly lashed by spray but a small islet, Ilhéu Mole, provides a little shelter for the sea-water swimming pools and harbour. The pools have been further enclosed by concrete breakwaters so that waves and currents affect the bathers less than might seem. It is a delightful corner, particularly on a calm day, with the little complex of café and changing facilities set out among the rocks.

Heading east from Porto do Moniz, the EN 101 suddenly takes on a new character. The narrow, winding, cobbled road is built into the side of sheer cliffs, the sea crashing furiously 20 or 30 ft below, waterfalls cascading over your head (buses and cars sometimes stop underneath for a free car-wash) into the foam below. Dramatic? It's stupendous. The cliffs above tower hundreds of feet into the air, black lava rocks twisted and tortured into bizarre shapes break the crashing waves below, and somewhere between, the road hugs the curves, beneath the constant drip-drip of moisture and tiny crevices that contain a variety of ferns, mosses and flowering saxifrages.

The first village after Porto do Moniz is just across the river of the same name, **Ribeira da Janela**, where a hydroelectric station harnesses some of the water for energy. The name 'da Janela' means 'of the window', after one of the nearby islets which has an opening through it like a window. Passing through two tunnels and beneath one of the magnificent waterfalls, the road leads on to **Seixal**, situated on a small promontory surrounded by vineyards; it's major wine-producing area. There are a few good-sized new houses here, built by *emigrantes* – i.e. Madeirans who've been overseas to make their fortune and then returned home. The name of the village is thought to come from the Portuguese word for pebbles (literally: 'stone ground'). On along the coast with the Atlantic crashing on one side and cliffs towering overhead, through 'the tunnel of seven windows' with seven openings in the cliff wall, underneath another cascade of water, round the mouth of the **Ribeira do Inferno** ('River of Hell') towards **São Vicente**. This little town is set back from the sea, sheltered somewhat by the hills rising along the banks of the Ribeira de São Vicente, where the inland road heads over the mountains and south to Ribeira Brava (15 miles away). At the mouth of the river there is a tiny 17th-century chapel to St Vincent built actually

into a rock. On the eastern bank of the river, a larger modern chapel (built 1952) stands on a hilly ledge, the focal point of an annual **festival** in honour of Our Lady of Fatima (13 October). The parish church of São Vicente (18th century) has an attractive interior with a painting of the village itself on the ceiling.

Thick vegetation – laurels, pines, osiers, broom – marks the start of the climb inland . . . but for the moment we're following the coast.

The North-East Coast

Crossing the river from São Vicente, the EN 101 continues eastwards for about 5 miles to Ponta Delgada, the coastline bordered with basalt cliffs and black lava rocks fringed by the sea. **Ponta Delgada** stands upon a rocky promontory with cultivated fields all round; apart from the natural rocky swimming pool, the main attraction here is the 18th century church, dedicated to Bom Jesus (Good Jesus), whose image was discovered in a box on the nearby shoreline; he is the object of a major local **festival** every first Sunday in September, when pilgrims come from all over the island, after walking solidly for three days across mountains in order to attend. The road now heads inland to the village of **Boaventurã**, surrounded by vineyards and pretty views up the valley of the Ribeira do Porco, so called because pigs used to be raised in the area. The landscape by now is greener, less awesome than those wet black cliffs of a few miles back, but still dramatically beautiful, the mountainsides clad in dense vegetation from wild lilies to great pine forests.

Between Boaventura and Arco de São Jorge the road passes through a newish 500-yard tunnel, emerging into another vine-growing district. **Arco de São Jorge** is a pretty village high on a cliff above the sea; a 17th-century landslip once carried away some of the houses here. Now the tourists come to admire a South African-style kraal, an attractive group of little houses shaped like native huts, plus a large circular restaurant which makes a good place to break the journey; the development is the work of more *emigrantes*. Climbing to **São Jorge** itself, 5 miles away, the flower lined road passes through terraces of vines, green and gold patches of cultivation beneath the steep forested hills. In São Jorge there is a 17th century church with a sumptuous baroque interior, the gilded altarpiece said to be the finest on the island.

The valley of the **Ribeira de São Jorge** is a beautiful area, the rolling hills descending to fertile terraces and rich red soil growing vines,

vegetables, peach trees and other crops, not to mention the profusion of wild flowers. Across the valley the road climbs to a height of over 2,000 ft, and to a small plateau where lies **Santana**, another picturesque village visited by all the excursion coaches. Amid the arum lilies, agapanthus, hydrangeas, watsonias etc. stand little thatched tent-shaped houses, like the *palheiros* (cattle sheds) but rather larger, gaily painted and looking like illustrations in a book of fairytales. There is now a law forbidding the destruction of any of these traditional Maderians houses and they are beautifully maintained. Leaving Santana, a road to the right leads up towards the **Queimadas Forest** and parks and eventually, via a footpath, up to Pico Ruivo, the highest point in Madeira (see below).

As the EN 101 descends towards **Faial**, there are magnificent views over the valley to the massive rocky outcrop called **Penha de Aguia**, 'Eagle Rock' (1,900 ft). The village of Faial gets its name from the Portuguese word for 'grove of beeches', though beech trees are less in evidence now than bananas, sugarcane and willows. On the other side of the valley, the road forks right across the mountains to Ribeiro Frio (see below) and back to Funchal; the ridge of **Lombo do Baixo** gives marvellous views down on either side (and there's an excellent restaurant here, Casa de Chá do Faial, with panoramic views from the windows). The EN 101, however, continues east through **São Roque do Faial**, perched on a crest facing the Penha de Aguia, to **Porto da Cruz**, a little fishing port with a modern church and a black shingly beach, a good place for seawater bathing.

The main highway now turns inland through Portela and down to Machico on the east coast, whence it returns south-west to Funchal. This part of the island is described below in the section on Eastern Madeira.

The Mountains

The Western Highlands. Madeira's western mountains form a high plateau called **Paúl da Serra**, tailing off in a roughly eastern ridge that is split by the deep ravine of Ribeira da Janela. Up here at around 5,000 ft the air is cool and crystal clear, and the views are breathtaking – an endless panorama of mountain peaks and green valleys laced with sparkling watercourses and reservoirs, blooming with heather, broom and gorse. It's possible to walk for miles through the mountains without seeing a living soul, just birds, butterflies and the occasional goat, but if

you are planning any serious walking do take the Underwoods' guide (see Bibliography) and remember that clouds can descend very quickly; it can be cold and wet and very dangerous when some of the paths follow extremely narrow mountain ledges.

To reach this region by road, take the right turn off the EN 101 between Canhas and Madalena do Mar (see above); it's a beautiful climb through forests and hills. Some 9 miles north from Canhas the road branches left and right: left along a poor surface towards the mountain village of **Rabaçal** ('parsnip grove') and lots of good picnic country, right towards **Estanquinhos** ('little ponds'), a refuge among the peaks of **Ruivo do Paúl** (5,380 ft), **Bica da Cana** (5,315 ft) and **Fonte do Juncal** (5,233 ft).

The Central Route. Between Ribeira Brava on the south coast and São Vicente in the north, the EN 104 climbs the central mountains and offers some magnificent scenery on the way. This really is the best route from Funchal to Porto do Moniz, much shorter than the west-coast route (see above). From Ribeira Brava the road (it starts out pretty rough) edges up the river valley full of bananas and sugarcane, with sheer cliffs and waterfalls on the left. By **Serra de Agua** ('mountain of water'), where the road surface suddenly improves, the altitude favours orchards of plum trees, nuts, figs and *nêsperas* or loquats, yellowish cherry-like fruit. Higher up there is a restaurant and little inn (*pousada*) at **Pousada dos Vinháticos** ('of the laurels'), a marvellous overnight base for walkers, perched high on a ridge with glorious views in all directions. Still climbing steeply, your ears popping as the altitude increases, 2½ miles on, you reach **Encumeada**, a mountain pass at 3,300 ft. Yet again the panorama takes the breath away – rocky summits, forested slopes of laurel, heather, juniper and myrtle, lush valleys full of tumbling streams and flowers – arum lilies, wild gladiolus, agapanthus. Finally the road descends through the village of **Rosario**, amid osiers and orange trees (local **festival**: first Sunday in October) to São Vicente on the north coast, 7 miles away.

The Eastern Peaks. The second highest mountain in Madeira at 5,965 ft **Pico do Arieiro** ('Peak of the Muleteer') can be climbed by even the laziest; a road reaches right to the top. To get there from Funchal, take the road to Monte (the EN 103) and follow it to **Poiso**, a pass at 4,600 ft, where a left turn takes you the 4½ miles up to the summit. Though often swathed in cloud, on a clear day this peak affords superb views: north to the **Pico das Torres** (5,900 ft) which hides Pico Ruivo, to the north-east coast and Penha de Aguia, to the easternmost tip of Ponta da São

Lourenço, and west to the Curral das Freiras peaks, even as far as the Paúl da Serra.

There is a path from Pico do Arieiro to the top of **Pico Ruivo** ('reddish peak'), the island's highest mountain at 6,109 ft; the walk there and back takes at least six hours, but you could stay overnight at the little rest-house on Pico Ruivo if you've made advance arrangements through the Tourist Office. Another path leads to Pico Ruivo from the north coast road up from Santana, via the **Queimadas Park**, an enchanted forest of dense greenery and trickling water (with a delightful little *pousada*: again, make advance reservations through the Tourist Office).

Between Poiso and Faial, the EN 103 from Funchal leads through **Ribeiro Frio**, 'Cold River', where there is a government trout hatchery; visitors are welcome and excursion coaches often stop here, not only to see the young fish but also to enjoy the scenery, cool and green and perfect for a picnic on a hot day. A path from Ribeiro Frio leads up to **Balcões**, a marvellous viewpoint with Pico do Arieiro rising off to the west – but beware: the path *beyond* Balcões is described in the Underwoods' book as 'for experts only'; that way danger lies.

Eastern Madeira

One very popular spot on the sightseeing tours is **Camacha**, centre of the island's wickerwork industry. To get there from Funchal, take the east coast road (EN 101) to the nondescript village of **São Gonçalo** and turn left onto the EN 102: Camacha is about 6 miles out of the city, where the altitude and climate is just right for the osiers (vîmes); it also happens to be popular with the Funchalenses who build their summer houses here. The wickerworking goes on all around, from the cutting, stripping and drying of the osiers to the nifty handiwork itself, producing every conceivable shape of basketry. Camacha's other claim to fame is its folk dancing; most of Around the Island's dancers come from this area – maybe it's the climate again.

From Camacha, the EN 102 winds an irregular course north-east for around 5½ miles to the left-hand turn to Poiso (see above) and continues for another 4½ miles to **Portela** ('little gateway'), a hill pass at 2,100 ft, where the left fork takes you on the north coast route to Porto da Cruz, and the right fork leads down to Machico. Golfers may want to stop en route at **Santo da Serra** (short for Santo António da Serra), where there is a good golf course amid beautiful scenery (plus a bar and restaurant in

the clubhouse). From here, one road leads south-east to the airport and Santa Cruz, another heads for Machico and north-east.

Machico, on the Baia de Zarco, is where Zarco made his first landing on Madeira in 1419, and where the lovers Robert Mackean/Machim and Anne d'Arset supposedly arrived before him. It was Zarco's fellow discoverer, Tristão Vaz Teixeira, who founded Machico; he made it the administrative capital of his half of the island. Though it never made the big time like Funchal, it is still a most attractive small town in a wide green valley. The river Ribeira de Machico flows into the bay, where a black sand and shingle beach curves round the harbour. Now one of Madeira's most popular holiday towns, Machico has a large 5-star hotel tucked into one corner of the bay, with especially good facilities for watersports enthusiasts. In the old part of town, the late 15th-century Manueline church dominates the main square; King Manuel himself donated the image of the Virgin above the altar. Teixeira, whose statue stands in front of the church, had a chapel built the year after he arrived, apparently on the site of the runaway lovers' grave; that chapel was destroyed by storms in 1803 but was rebuilt in 1829 – it's the little Capela dos Milagros (Chapel of Miracles) that stands on the east of the bridge. Notice the Gothic doorway, which is all that remains of the original. Teixeira also built a chapel to São Roque at the west end of the bay, on the site of the present one which dates from the 17th century; inside you can see more of the beautiful *azulèjos.*

Round the bay to the east, where the fishermen's quarter is, there stands a small early 18th century fortress presumably intended more as a lookout post than a means of defence.

East of Machico, the EN 101-3 leads to **Caniçal**, a fishing port known as Madeira's whaling village. Whaling is certainly not a large-scale industry in the island, but occasional sperm and finback whales are caught offshore and brought back for the ugly business of processing in Caniçal's factory. Every bit is used for oil and meat, while the bones and teeth are whittled and carved into ornaments that are sold in souvenir shops.

From Caniçal there are splendid walks out along the long narrow easternmost peninsula of the island, **Ponta de São Lourenço**. On the south is Madeira's one and only sandy beach at **Prainha** which can be reached by a bumpy track east out of Caniçal or more easily by boat. At the end of the peninsula are two straggling rocky islets, **Ilhéu de Agostinho** and **Ilhéu de Fora**, the latter with a lighthouse.

Leaving Machico and heading south-west, the road passes below the **Matur** tourist development at **Agua de Pena**, a neat and attractive modern complex of villas and apartments overlooking the sea. There's

everything here to keep the holidaymaker happy, and Machico is only a short walk away, but even now plans are afoot for further amenities like a marina below on the coast. On the next headland stands the **Airport**, about 3 miles from Machico, 14 miles from Funchal. This rocky ledge with runway and terminal overlooking the promontory of Ponta de Santa Catarina used to be part of a huge banana plantation.

Santa Cruz, the village in the next bay, was so named after the 'Holy Cross' that Zarco planted here during his tour of the island. It's a charming little port with good swimming (and changing facilities) off its shingly beach and a very attractive 16th-century church dedicated to São Salvador. Inside, the ceiling is painted scrollwork giving a 3-D effect, the twisted columns support the chancel vaulting; off the north aisle, a small chapel houses a fine Manueline tomb, while the sacristy contains some beautiful tilework. Two interesting 16th century buildings stand near the church, the former town hall and the present one.

About $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles towards Funchal, just before **Caniço**, a village famed for its onions apparently and dominated by the pretty 18th-century church steeple, a left turn leads to two modern tourist complexes, **Reis Magos** to the east and **Atlas** to the west on the prominent headland of Ponta do Garajau. Both areas, like Matur, are a mixture of villas and apartments, especially popular with Germans and Scandinavians, with the usual sophisticated amenities, restaurants, nightclubs, shops etc. From here it's only a short hop ($5\frac{1}{2}$ miles) into Funchal.

8 Porto Santo, the Desertas and the Selvagens

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Porto Santo

Geography. The only other inhabited island in the Madeira Archipelago, Porto Santo could not be more different. It has the same volcanic origins and lies a mere 27 miles north-east of Madeira, but is is almost flat by comparison – the highest point is 1,695 ft (Pico do Facho) – and there is a magnificent long sandy beach on the south coast. Only 16 square miles in area, it's like a desert after Madeira's lush greenery, though vines grow well in the sandy soil, as do cereals, tomatoes, melons and figs. Agriculture and fishing are the two chief occupations of the 4,000 odd inhabitants, who live mainly in the tiny capital known as Porto Santo but with the alternative name of Vila Baleira.

History. Discovered by Zarco and Teixeira in 1418 – before Madeira – the first governor of the island was Bartolomeu Perestrelo, whose daughter married Christopher Columbus. Columbus and his wife lived here for a while and the house they're supposed to have lived in is one of Porto Santo's few *monumentos*. The relative aridity of the island, however, partly caused by Perestrelo's guzzling rabbits, never attracted so many colonists as Madeira; anyway the island is too tiny to support a large community. Its peaceful existence through the centuries was barely disturbed by construction of the new airport in 1960-62, bigger than

Madeira's airport and designated a Reserve NATO Air Base, thanks to which visitors can now come to share the peace.

How to get there. There are daily flights from Madeira (flight time: 20 minutes) and almost daily boat trips (3 hours) in the little *Pirata Azul*: see the chapter above on Getting There. The ferry docks at a little pier from which the town is a 10 minutes' walk away, although taxis wait to transport you the same short distance. Taxis also meet every flight at the airport. There is a bus service but it's so irregular as to be of no use to tourists.

Accommodation. There is only one hotel on the island, the 4-star Hotel Porto Santo, just west out of town. It is a very attractive small hotel set in pretty gardens on the edge of the beach – and you simply must make advance reservations, especially between Easter and September (Hotel Porto Santo, Ilha de Porto Santo, Madeira; tel. 82 381). A new hotel is half constructed a mile or two west along the beach, with grandiose facilities planned, but completion is unlikely within the next five years.

Humbler accommodation may be found at the following *pensões* (boarding houses) in Porto Santo:

4-star Pensão Residential Cristóvão Colombo (82 182); on the road from the airport. Simple but adequate.

3-star Pensão Central (82 226); up a very steep cobbled lane from the main square, it is plain but very friendly and not too uncomfortable.

1-star Pensão Palmeira, Porto Santo (82 112). On the main square. Plain.

Restaurants and other facilities. The Hotel Porto Santo's restaurant is open to non residents and besides good cuisine offers folkdancing displays between the tables (alternate Saturdays). More popular with the locals is Baiana, on the town's main square, a bar-restaurant where you can sit on a bougainvillea trailing terrace and watch the passers-by. The food here is regional, including *espada* fish and other local specialities. There is also a good little *restaurante típico* down on the beach, the Corsario, which turns into a lively discothèque after 10 pm. Other restaurants involve a taxi ride out of town to Camacha in the north (Estrela do Norte and Torres, both serving regional food) or to Serra de Fora in the western hills, where the tiny bar restaurant of Teodorico offers the best *espetada* (skewered beef) you'll ever taste.

One popular place for drinking, not far from town, is Captain's Pub at Lapeiras; in town itself is the Adega Zarco bar, just up from the fish market, and also the tiny bar of Ti Alejandro, a charming wizened old

man who's only too delighted to have you sit among his huge wine barrels sampling one brew after another before deciding what you'll actually buy. This is the best place to try Porto Santo's own produce, a sweetish white wine (ask for *vinho branco de Porto Santo*).

Around Town. The tiny capital of the island is easily explored on foot in half a morning. From the pier where ferryboat passengers disembark, a narrow shady avenue leads up towards the main square, **Praça Municipal**, actually triangular in shape and dominated by half a dozen tall palms. To the north of the square is the church, **Igreja da Piedade**, dating from the 15th century; to the west is Porto Santo's most imposing public building, the **Câmara Municipal** (Town Hall), just above a fine old house with pretty gardens overlooking the sea and now the seat of the regional government. Between the latter and the Town Hall a street runs west out of town past a few small shops and banks and the **Correio** (Post Office). Below lies the marvellous beach, fine yellow sand stretching for miles in either direction, with showers and changing facilities, an occasional beach-bar, and room for everyone, even in July-August when the Madeirans come here for their holidays.

From the main square a road to the east passes a tiny cinema before joining the road that leads (left) to the airport, (left and immediately right) to the Pensão Colombo and (right again) down the Rua Gonçalves Zarco, with Ti Alejandro's bar at one end and the **market** at the other.

Down by the pier stands a **monument** (raised 1960) to the 1418 discovery of the island, with an appropriate quote from the epic poems of Portugal's great 16th-century writer, Camões. The **Casa de Cristóvão Colombo**, where Columbus supposedly lived, stands in a lane above the church at Rua Cristóvão Colombo 12; you may be able to get in, if you can find the keyholder (try the priest).

Outside the Town. West of town, an easy ramble either on the beach or along the road takes you to the south-west tip of the island by **Ilhéu de Baixo**, a large rocky islet separated from the main island by a narrow channel, where limestone is quarried. This western half of Porto Santo is dominated by **Pico de Ana Ferreira** (over 900 ft), whose summit gives good views over the ochre landscape and patches of green vineyards.

Lapeiras, an untidy inland village, lies north-west of town, surrounded by level fields where donkeys and even tractors work – a sight never seen on Madeira. Two or three old windmills stand around here, once used for milling grain but now rather tumbledown and abandoned. From Lapeiras, a rough sandy track follows the airport perimeter north, then branches left to **Fonte de Areia**. This popular picnic spot stands below

Porto Santo

ILHÉU DAS CENOURAS
N
Baixa dos Barbeiros
Serra de Dentro
Pico do Facho
Serra de Fora
ILHÉU DE CIMA
Pico do Castelo
Camacha
Fonte da Areia
Porto Santo
Lapeiras
Pico de Ana Ferreira
0 1 2 3 4 5
km
mls
0 1 2 3
Porto Santo: Key
1 Pier
2 Airport
3 Capela da Graça
ILHÉU DE FERRO
ILHÉU DE BAIXO

sandy cliffs on the north coast. The name means 'Fountain of Sand' but the fountain is actually pure water, the only good water you'll taste on the island (though Agua de Porto Santo, the mineral water, is much in demand on Madeira).

Leaving the coast behind, take the left hand road to **Camacha**, a mere cluster of humble cottages with two tin-roofed restaurants creating mouthwatering odours. Another left turn takes you down to the north coast amid high cliffs, while a right turn takes you back to town past the airport terminal.

Near Camacha it's possible to drive almost to the top of **Pico do Castelo** (1,435 ft), an old volcanic cone crowned by a ruined 16th-century fort which was once the islanders' refuge from pirates. A forestry plantation covers the slopes and it's a marvellous place to picnic and admire the views. Just east of Pico do Castelo rises **Pico do Facho**, the island's highest point and well worth the climb for the splendid views all over the island, even to Madeira.

Twisting round these eastern peaks, a good road passes through the small villages of **Serra de Dentro** and **Serra de Fora**, coming out on the south coast again at **Portela**, where a mirador offers yet more fine views. A track off the road here leads to the little **Capela da Graça**, high on a hillside looking down to the town. This chapel is the focus of the island's main **festival** in honour of the Assumption (15 August); another big local festival takes place at the end of June, in honour of St Peter.

The Desertas

The three Ilhas Desertas, or 'Deserted Islands', lie about 11 miles south-east of Funchal, composed mainly of the same volcanic basalt rock as Madeira. Nearest the main island is the table-shaped **Ilhéu Chão**, followed by **Ilha Deserta Grande**, with a ridge of hills (highest point 1,450 ft), and **Ilha Bugio** with its rocky cliffs.

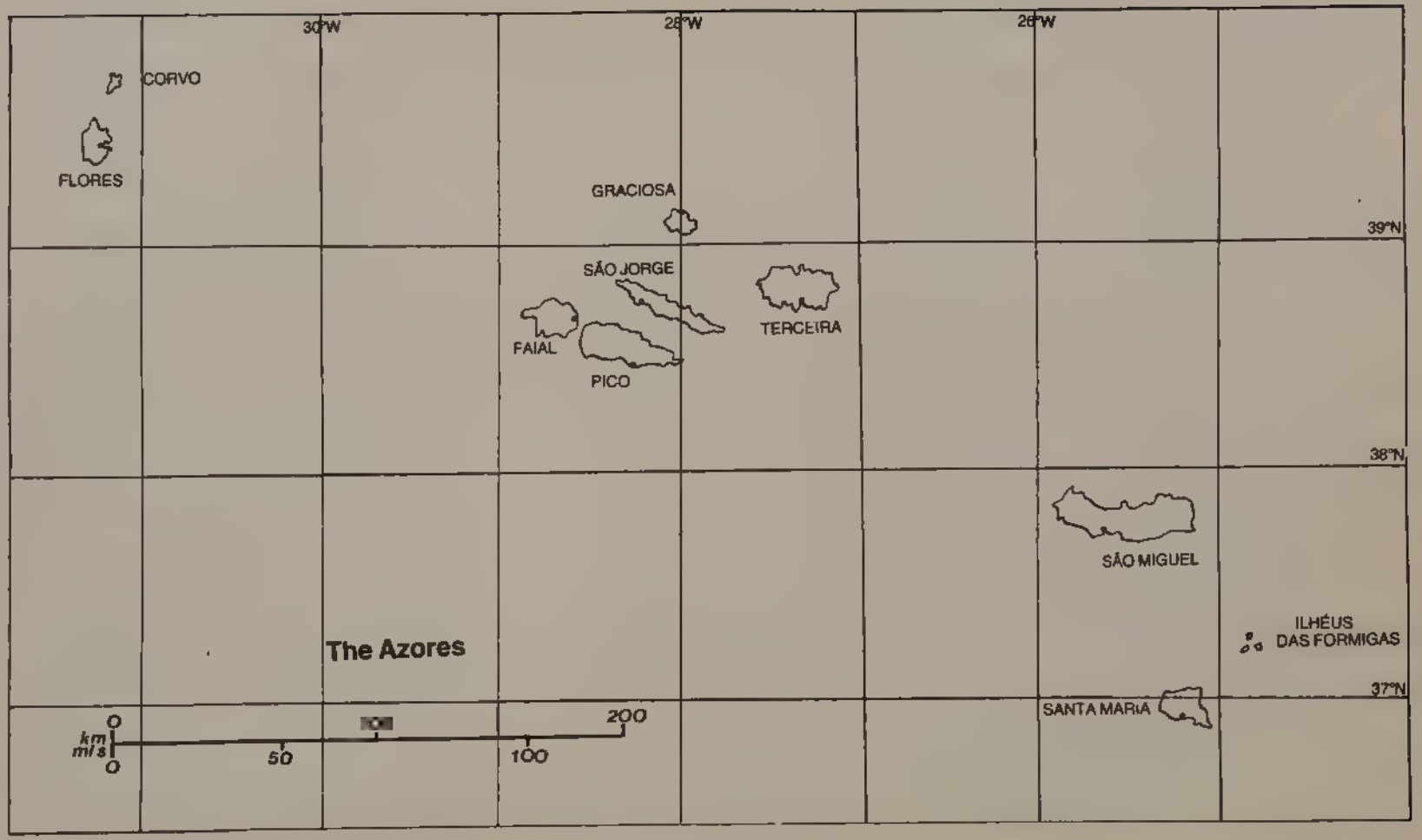
Although there are no permanent inhabitants, fishermen sail around the Desertas' coasts and occasional herdsmen used to bring their goats here to graze; once in a while the orchilla plant that grows here naturally is collected for use in the dying industry. As well as the feral goats there are hundreds of puffins and other seabirds here, and rabbits and seals.

Once privately owned, now belonging to the State, you still need special permission to land on the Desertas, which are in any case very difficult to land on owing to their steep cliffsides. But boat trips are sometimes arranged around the islands (ask at Funchal's Tourist Office).

The Selvagens

At Lat. 30°N exactly, about 135 miles south of the Desertas – and much nearer to the Canary Islands – are the two groups of small islands known collectively as Ilhas Selvagens or 'Savage Islands'. Again of volcanic origin and separated by a deep 8-mile channel, the two groups of islands include **Ilha Selvagem Grande** in the north, with its offlying rocky satellites **Palheiro da Terra** and **Palheiro do Mar**, and **Ilha Sevalgem Pequenha** and **Ilhéu de Fora** in the south, surrounded by scores of tiny islets and reefs.

Small, bare, bleak and hard to reach, these islands are visited only by fishermen, the fishing grounds round here being particularly rich – indeed, so rich that the Portuguese Air Force and Navy watch over them to make sure Spanish or other vessels don't poach. There's not much chance of your ever seeing the Selvagens except for a fleeting glimpse through an aeroplane window en route for Tenerife.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FLORES
GRACIOSA
SÃO JORGE
TERCEIRA
FAIAL
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ILHÉUS
DAS FORMIGAS
SANTA MARIA
The Azores
km
mls
0
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100
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PART III
THE AZORES

1 Introduction

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'But where exactly are the Azores?' is most people's first thought. They're nearly half way across the Atlantic Ocean, on the same latitude as both Lisbon and Washington. And their geographical situation is the most important point to grasp as it explains everything about these islands: climate, history, economy, their inhabitants and present-day significance. Discovered in the 15th century, the Azores (spelt Açores in Portuguese) are still considered to be remote even in this day of jet travel, and tourists have yet to find them. But for over five hundred years they have provided a useful stepping-stone for sailors crossing the Atlantic, and now in the 20th century their strategic position is highly prized by military men in both Europe and America.

There are nine islands in the Azores archipelago, plus the rocky shoals and sandbanks that make up the Ilhéus das Formïgas. And nine more beautiful islands would be hard to find. This is a gentle paradise of green fields bordered with hydrangeas, hillsides covered in azaleas, forested slopes rising above a colourful patchwork of fields, blue lagoons nestling in high volcanic craters. Washed by the everchanging Atlantic Ocean, there's a freshness here, a sense of innocence and peace which

enchants the traveller and prompts escapist dreams when he returns to 'civilization'.

But so far only relatively few travellers have visited the Azores other than those who pause for breath here during an Atlantic crossing. There is as yet no tourist industry to speak of; holiday accommodation is still extremely limited, although new hotels are being planned in some of the islands, and very few places provide anything like the usual tourist attractions such as nightclubs or even souvenir shops. There is, however, plenty to do, from exploring the cobbled streets of old colonial towns to climbing Mount Pico, the highest mountain in the archipelago – and of course exploiting that vast warm ocean, sailing, diving and fishing in its clean blue-green waters.

The Portuguese Tourist Office is only now beginning to promote the archipelago – currently with the slogan 'The Azores: Nine Atlantic Islands just waiting for you!' – but as the word gets round, a rising flood of future visitors will undoubtedly be attracted by the unspoilt charms of these enchanting islands.

Geography

The nine islands together make up a total area of 898 square miles. They are divided into three distinct groups: the eastern islands of São Miguel and Santa Maria; the central group: Terceira, Graciosa, São Jorge, Pico and Faial; and the western group, Flores and Corvo. Over 850 miles west of Lisbon, they rest upon the Mid Atlantic Ridge, forming the peaks of that long submarine chain of mountains – and therein lies the story of their birth.

Origin. The Mid Atlantic Ridge marks a sort of weak point in the Earth's surface, the focus of attention for geologists trying to explain Continental Drift theories. From Iceland in the Arctic north to Tristan da Cunha in the south Atlantic, all the islands on this chain are characterized by volcanic activity, and that includes the Azores. While most of the Azorean volcanoes are now extinct, subterranean forces still demonstrate their presence by occasional eruptions – only twenty five years ago the Capelinhos volcano in Faial dramatically altered that island's west coastline – and by earthquakes: in 1980 Terceira, Graciosa and São Jorge were hit by a severe quake which destroyed seventy per cent of Terceira's capital, Angra do Heroísmo. From the dark basalt rocks and now peaceful green craters to bubbling sulphurous mudbaths,

the landscape everywhere proclaims its origins and incidentally attracts hordes of geologists to admire and study them.

Physical Features. Most of the islands have steep rocky coastlines – notably Corvo, the smallest of the Azores which is virtually inaccessible to those who don't know exactly where to land – with low green mountain ranges in a generally pyramid-shaped profile. The island of Pico consists almost entirely of the central peak to which it owes its name, a magnificent volcanic cone of perfect proportions, like a Japanese painting; rising to a height of 7,700 ft, it's by far the tallest peak in the Azores, taller even than any mountain in continental Portugal.

Due to the rich volcanic soil and to the mild subtropical climate (see below), the Azores are enormously fertile; even uncultivated regions are lush with greenery and the fields can produce three or four crops a year. With the exception of a few bare mountain peaks and the dry cindery soil in areas of recent volcanic activity, it's the luxuriant greenness that makes such an impression on visitors, often compared with Ireland's emerald beauty. The landscape is generally much gentler than in Madeira, much less arid than the Canaries. Owing to the adequate rainfall, water is certainly no problem to the Azores which Nature has further endowed with freshwater reserves in the form of mountain lakes or lagoons, their overspill trickling sweetly down to meet the Atlantic brine.

Climate. Contrary to expectations, the Azores are not bathed in constant sunshine. This popular misconception presumably arises from assocation with the 'Azores Anti-Cyclone' that the British public hears mentioned in meteorological reports, as it usually means fine weather for us. In fact, the islands lie in the path of all the storms and depressions that have threatened transatlantic sailors from Columbus to Claire Francis. But the climate is very mild, temperatures seldom falling below 55°F (13°C) in January or rising much about 77°F (25°C) in August. The wettest months are between October and March, though even in summer a sudden squall can catch you without an umbrella. Winds are often very fresh – ideal for the sailor – though similarly tend to be strongest in winter.

Sea temperatures, however, are delicious, a relatively constant 61-73°F (16-23°C) all year round.

Flora and Fauna. Thickly wooded when they were discovered in the 15th century, the islands' flora now comprises a lush mixture of tropical and temperate species introduced from all parts of the world. Brazilian

yellow-woods, Australian eucalyptus, coniferous sequoias from California, dragon trees from Madeira and the Canaries, Japanese larches, oriental plane trees, tulip trees, rhododendrons and a hundred other species. Native plants include myrtles junipers, heather, hollies and yew, now heavily outnumbered by the naturalized newcomers, either from forestry plantations or 'escapees' from parks and gardens. In spring and summer the islands are a riot of colour; blue hydrangeas and agapanthus lining the roadsides and dividing fields, rosy azaleas glowing against dark forested hills, waxy white camellias and arum lilies, purple bougainvillea, scarlet hibiscus and lots more. There are several varieties unique to these islands, notably in the orchid family such as the heart flowered orchid (*Serapius cordigera*) and the endemic butterfly orchid (*Platanthera micrantha*), just two additions to this exuberant display of floral riches.

As far as they are from both America and Europe, perhaps it's not surprising that the Azores have virtually no native fauna save the birds and marine life. When the Portuguese first came here they named the islands after a prolific local bird which they incorrectly identified as *açores* or goshawks – buzzards or kites, more likely, though they no longer inhabit these islands. The early colonists brought all the domestic animals, cattle, sheep, boats, horses etc, and later – either by accident or design – rabbits, rodents, frogs, lizards, cats, dogs and every other animal now found in the archipelago, including quail and partridge introduced for game. Now the seabirds share the islands with hundreds of non-native species, including several familiar birds which have evolved into separate sub-species, such as the chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs moreletti*), with a greenish tinge rather than chestnut. Another local finch is the wild canary (*Serinus canaria*), its song as sweet as in the Canary Islands from whence it came.

History

Before the Portuguese came here in the 15the century, precious little is known about the Azores' past, and as with the Canaries and Madeira, this mysterious prehistory has proved a fertile ground for legend and myth. Plato's description of the Lost Continent of Atlantis – a paradise on Earth once situated somewhere west of the Pillars of Hercules (the Straits of Gibraltar) which sank below the ocean surface – has been identified by some as the submarine plateau beneath the Azores. Only recently a visiting politician described the islands as 'the vestiges of

Atlantis', and the Azoreans tell themselves stories of their Atlantean ancestors – clearly apocryphal since the islands were uninhabited when the Portuguese arrived.

There is, however, a possibility that the islands had been visited by Carthaginians, merchants and traders who were perhaps blown off course when rounding the African coast in search of new trading routes. As Thor Heyerdahl has demonstrated, there is at least a theoretical chance that ancient mariners successfully crossed the Atlantic long before Columbus, maybe finding shelter and fresh water in the Azores, and there have been reports of Carthaginian coins discovered by divers off the island coasts. Alas, one oft-repeated story which supported the Carthaginian theory is untrue: it used to be said that the Portuguese colonists found a statue of a horseman on Corvo, one arm pointing west as though showing the way to the yet-to-be-discovered New World, but the 'statue' was apparently nothing more than a curious rock formation.

Discovery and Colonization. Traditionally the Azores are supposed to have been discovered by Diogo de Silvas and Gonçalo Velho Cabral in 1427. It is thought, however, that Genoese sailors had visited the islands nearly a hundred years earlier – possibly in the service of Portugal – as rough charts have been found dating from that period. But it wasn't until 1439 that Prince Henry the Navigator endorsed the Portuguese claim, initiating the process of colonization under Gonçalo Velho Cabral, who became the first *capitão donatório* (governor) of the archipelago.

Lacking precise documented evidence, different historians offer conflicting accounts of the early years; the Portuguese were then very cagey about their overseas discoveries, competing as they were with the Spanish in the field of maritime exploration, and probably there never was much documentation, though many of the chronicles that are known to have existed have been destroyed by earthquakes and eruptions. What does seem apparent is that Prince Henry had trouble in finding people willing to colonize these remote islands, and had to accept non-Portuguese help in populating the Azores, mainly from the Flemish and French, traces of whose presence is still identifiable in certain areas. Santa Maria and São Miguel were the first to become inhabited, then Terceira (*terceira* in Portuguese means 'third')...and finally Flores and Corvo, the two most westerly islands which were not even discovered until 1452 and not colonized until early the next century.

Small settlements began to spring up as the colonists cultivated the rich soil, planting sugarcane and vines brought from Madeira, plus cereals and other crops to supplement continental Portugal's meagre resources. They brought cattle, sheep and goats with them and were able

to supply provisions to visiting ships still extending the boundaries of the known world. Indeed, many of the Azores' early inhabitants themselves joined the voyages of exploration, especially after Brazil was discovered in the early 1500s, leaving these isolated islands in the hope of finding greater riches elsewhere: a phenomenon that is still characteristic of the people here today. A certain João Fernandes of Terceira was with the Italian Cabot when he explored the northern waters of the Atlantic in 1498 and Labrador (a Portuguese word meaning 'farmworker') was named by Cabot in honour of his Azorean friend. Around the same time, Gaspar Corte Real – also from Terceira – discovered Newfoundland; his ship sank and he drowned before being able to convince King Manuel I of Portugal that here was a country worth claiming.

Columbus. Like all these Atlantic islands, the Azores have first-hand tales to tell about Christopher Columbus. While living in Portugal and Madeira, he had heard stories from fishermen and explorers who had sailed west beyond the Azores, stories which told of native artefacts floating ashore on these islands, even of land having been seen to the west, all of which fuelled his belief that this was the way to the Indies. Then, with Spanish support, he made his great discovery in 1492. Sailing home in February 1493, severe storms made him put into Santa Maria for shelter – but he was not exactly made welcome. When his crew went ashore they were set upon and captured by the Azoreans, led by the acting governor João da Castanheira (João Soares, the real governor, had gone to Lisbon to get married). Apparently Castanheira had been instructed by the Portuguese King to seize Columbus himself, perhaps because the Portuguese were jealous that he should now be working for Spain. During an angry confrontation with Castanheira, negotiating for the release of his men, Columbus asserted: 'I shan't go ashore or even leave this ship until we've taken a hundred Portuguese and thereby depopulated all the island!'... Sixty years after colonization began, it seems there were still only a handful of settlers in Santa Maria. Finally, after a detour to São Miguel, Columbus managed to get his crew back and sailed off to tell the world of his great discovery.

The 16th Century. A slow but steady stream of colonists trickled into the Azores from Portugal, Flanders and France and also from Madeira. One of the first governors of São Miguel was from Madeira, Rui Gonçalves de Câmara, the son of João Gonçalves Zarco who had discovered that island in 1419; with him Rui Gonçalves brought scores of men and families who had originally settled in Madeira. With their increasing numbers and helped by Moorish and Negro slave labour, the

islands' inhabitants gradually began to make their impact. Forests were cleared and the timber used for building homes or exported to Portugal; fields were planted with wheat, barley, sugarcane and potatoes. In 1480 one of the Flemish colonists had introduced the woad plant to produce dye for export home to Flanders, contributing his own pennyworth to the islands' fledging economy, and other crops were tried out in the rich volcanic soil. But progress was hindered by the dense natural vegetation, the need to build walls and fences to protect crops from strong winds and in some places by difficulty in tilling the ground – in Pico the first colonists actually had to crack open the surface crust of volcanic ash before planting their vines. Small settlements gradually grew into villages and towns, generally along the coastline as access to the interior was impeded by forests, and the first habitations – wooden huts thatched with straw – became stone cottages built in the various architectural styles of the different nationalities: Portuguese or North European. Angra in Terceira gradually developed into the mercantile heart of the archipelago, and merchants built themselves fine mansions and churches here. In 1534 Pope Paul III saw fit to establish the archipelago's first bishopric in Angra, proof that the islands by now had a steady and sizeable permanent population.

But early commerce was a sad disappointment to the colonists. Despite the fertile soil and optimistic planting of vines, sweet potatoes, maize, yams and later citrus fruits, the agricultural produce still had to be shipped on long voyages home eastwards before reaching European markets – a problem that has been only partially resolved with modern air transport. What really put the islands on the map was the simple fact of their geographical location; they became a sort of busy crossroads in mid Atlantic as a constant to-and-fro of caravels and galleons passed through en route for America. Even ships returning home from Portuguese territories in the Orient sailed out as far as the Azores to catch the prevailing westerlies that speeded them home to Portugal.

Laden as these ships were with treasure from America and spices from the East Indies, the Azores soon became unwilling hosts to pirates and privateers, attracted both by the merchantmen's riches and by the prospect of pillaging the homes and farms of the unfortunate Azoreans. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries their attacks caused havoc among the islands' small communities in spite of brave attempts to defy them. Faial particularly suffered from attacks by Englishmen, notably the Duke of Cumberland's corsairs in 1589 and the young Walter Raleigh in 1597.

The 17th and 18th Centuries. As if these ferocious maritime raids were not enough of a plague, the Azoreans also had to contend with occa

sional volcanic activity. In São Miguel, for example, the town of Vila Franca do Campo was all but destroyed by an earthquake in 1630 and the Furnas valley was the scene of a violent eruption. To the Azoreans it must have seemed that for every step forward they were forced to take two steps back.

Meanwhile, as far as they were from the mainland, the islands could not escape the effects of upheavals back home. In 1580 the Spanish King Felipe II had claimed the Portuguese throne and Portugal and all her territories came under Spanish rule. Dom António, Prior of Crato and pretender to the Portuguese throne, fled to the Azores to organize opposition to Felipe, aided by the British and French. Based in Terceira, he assembled a fleet of ships and soldiers, but Felipe sent out a determined force of men under the Marques de Santa Cruz who launched a terrible attack on Angra. The islanders put up a fierce defence, constituting the last bastion of Portuguese independence before finally capitulating in 1582.

During the period of Spanish rule (1582-1640), the administration of the Azores had been altered, Angra becoming capital of the whole archipelago, where previously each of the islands had been governed by an individual *capitão donatório* appointed by the King. Following Portugal's restored national status in 1640, local administration reverted to its former semi-anarchic style until 1766. Then under the Marquês de Pombal, adviser to King José I, the archipelago became a united *capitánia geral*, the Capitão himself based at Angra but supervising law and order in all the islands.

Further attempts to bolster the islands' economy through agriculture were meeting with continual lack of success, and emigration grew as fast as the population, prompted by both the slow progress here and the promise of greater wealth in the New World.

The 19th Century. Outside events again impinged on the Azores when rivalry between Liberals and Absolutists in Portugal led to naval battles between opposing factions off the island of Terceira in 1829. The Liberals came out victorious, partly thanks to the support of the Azoreans, and their candidate for the throne, Dom Pedro (later Pedro I of Brazil), consquently established his Regency in the Azores. Under the Duque de Terceira, the islanders displayed such courage in fighting for the Liberal cause that a royal decree later renamed their capital Angra do Heroísmo ('of heroism'), while the town of Vila de Praia became Praia da Vitória.

In the 1830s, constitutional reforms under the Liberals in Portugal produced further administrative changes in the islands, culminating in

the creation of three provinces, the provincial capitals at Angra do Heroísmo (Terceira), Ponta Delgada (São Miguel) and Horta (Faial). The new regime moreover encouraged economic progress and commercial trading centres in the archipelago – but with some unfortunate results, as only the principal towns benefited while the countryside became rapidly depopulated and ignored. Emigration grew to alarming proportions as the Azoreans left home to seek work and wealth mainly in North America. At about this time, the Bensaúde family arrived in São Miguel, destined to make a major impact on the islands' economy. They saw the agricultural decline and were among the first to introduce measures to reverse the trend; they established tobacco and tea plantations and founded the Micaelense tobacco factory in 1866, advanced the tentative new culture of pineapples in the early 1870s, then became involved in alcohol distillation (from sugarbeet) and banking – and their influence is still strong today.

Meanwhile the islands had become less isolated when America and Portugal agreed in 1855 to lay a transatlantic telegraph cable through the Azores. By this time, too, the age of steam ships has arrived, with great liners visiting the two principal ports, Ponta Delgada and Horta, bringing with them foreign enterprises, American, English and German, to exploit the new telegraph communications.

Towards the end of the century, political pressure from within the Azores reached such a pitch that certain measures of autonomy were granted to the islands in 1895. Backward and poor as they were – just like Portugal herself, in comparison with the rest of Europe – the Azores thus entered the 20th century curiously confident in the belief that they could make their own way in the world. This confidence surely had no basis in expectations of economic independence; industry was undeveloped and agriculture and fishing were still the chief sources of income for most islanders. The population was small (256,000 in 1900), poor and uneducated and many people seemed only too eager to escape to North America. But they were hardworking and fiercely independent in spirit, as islanders of any nationality tend to be, and they resented the patronizing attitude of continental Portugal – a facet of their character still apparent today.

The 20th Century. In 1910 the archipelago became part of republican Portugal, still administered as three provinces. The virtual dictatorship of Dr Salazar (see section on Madeira) effected no dramatic changes in life for the Azoreans until World War II. Agriculture remained the mainstay of the economy, but exporting fresh produce was barely feasible before the age of aeroplanes. The first commercial air service

started up just before the war when American seaplanes visited Horta (Faial) en route for Europe. Now the islands' strategic importance attracted the Allies' attention. Churchill had to be restrained from seizing the Azores to prevent their becoming a German U-boat base in the war, and America too wanted to annex the archipelago as a transit point for troops heading for Europe. Portugal was officially neutral in World War II and Salazar apparently regarded the USA with more than a touch of hostility, although the Americans had first call on the Azores, having established naval bases here during World War I. He eventually agreed to their building an air base in Terceira in 1943, only under the pretence that it was on loan to the British (another agreement later let them build the Santa Maria airport, 1944).

After the war, America wanted to maintain her presence in the islands and to that end persuaded Salazar to join NATO, so Portugal became one of the original fourteen countries to sign the North Atlantic Treaty. Thus the American air base in Terceira remained, and the Azores acquired a new status as an important commercial aviation centre. Simultaneously, hopes were raised for the islands' economic future. Improved air transport meant that fresh agricultural produce could now be exported and efforts were made to extend winter planting of early vegetables to meet the demands of Northern Europe. But the cost of air freighting was relatively high, thanks to the long distances involved, and establishing new markets was a painfully slow business.

Low living standards still contributed to continuing emigration; although the islanders tended to have large families, the total population of the Azores was still only 318,000 in 1950. During the first half of the century, roughly 200,000 Portuguese were registered as legal immigrants in the USA, over half of them from the Azores, and the phenomenon still remains a major factor here: in the years 1961-71, more than 74,000 Azoreans emigrated to the USA (particularly to new England) and Canada alone. The *emigrantes* nevertheless make a substantial contribution to the Azorean economy by remitting money home to the islands, and some of them eventually return to settle here, spreading their wealth among the less fortunate.

Today

The Azores have finally acquired self-control, thanks to the Army revolt in 1974 (see section on Madeira) which led to the socialists gaining power in Portugal and introducing wide-reaching constitutional reforms.

So, like Madeira, the Azores are now an 'Autonomous Region' of Portugal with their own Regional Government and their own flag (a hawk – an *açor?* – juggling nine stars to represent the nine islands), though remaining dependent on the mother country for financial support. The islanders still display a certain hostility towards *O Continente* as they call Portugal, and periodic demands for total indepen dence feature in the columns of the island Press.

Thanks to the constant flood of emigration, the entire archipelago's population is still only around 300,000, São Miguel being by far the most populous island with 140,000 inhabitants. In economic terms, the Azores are very undeveloped even now. More than half the population is involved in agriculture, and rural resistance to modern farming methods is only gradually declining. The principal agricultural exports are pine apples (grown under glass, mainly in São Miguel), with lesser quantities of dairy produce and winter vegetables being sold to continental Europe. Recently, flowers have been cultivated (as in Madeira) to export to Common Market countries including Britain, mostly carnations and spring bulbs.

Strangely enough, fishing was never a chosen occupation here until the last century, when the Azoreans watched Americans sailing into their waters to catch whales. Now fishing is relatively big business, the tuna canning industry in particular. Whaling too is carried on but on a very small scale, involving a dying race of hardy harpooners and oarsmen – no factory ships here, just 30 ft long wooden boats and men waiting for the cry '*Baleia*!' ('Whale!'). One other marine harvest is agar agar, obtained from seaweed and used in the world's chemical industries.

Most of the local industry revolves around agriculture: factories turn milk into powder for export, extract sugar from sugarbeet and sometimes distill it into alcohol, tobacco factories make use of locally grown tobacco for cigarettes. Wine is produced only for local consumption, the vines never having recovered after a fungus attack early last century, despite the introduction of a disease-resistant American variety called Isabella.

Lastly but by no means least, the Azores export *bordados*, beautiful embroidered linen produced by women working at home. Little more than a cottage industry, it nevertheless matches pineapples and fish canning in terms of earning foreign currency, and has justly achieved international fame.

Tourism as yet is in its infancy, but as the campaign to promote these islands gradually gathers steam, there's a strong possibility that holi daymakers will soon discover the Azores and add their pounds and

dollars to the local treasury. Already foreign developers are moving in to build hotels, particularly in São Miguel, and the Azoreans are beginning to acknowledge the need for facilities to cater for tourists, from night-clubs to organized sightseeing excursions. At present, however, the archipelago's special attraction lies in its unspoilt natural beauty and the perspective it offers on western materialism and hectic pace of life.

2 Getting There and Getting Around

By air, p242 By sea, p244

Once so isolated from the rest of the world, the Azores are now becoming increasingly accessible. Transatlantic liners may no longer stop here as often as they did only fifty years ago – another sign of how hurried the modern pace of life has become – though it's still possible to find cruise ships calling in on the archipelago. Now of course there is the alternative of air travel, a preferable choice for most holidaymakers; though direct scheduled flights are still a rarity, the growth of tourism will soon mean that the islands are as easy to reach as, say the Canaries.

Within the Azores there are adequate inter-island communications, though these too are likely to improve as the tourist trade picks up. And within the individual islands there's no problem in getting round; roads here are generally good, much better than in Madeira, having been built mostly within the past thirty years. But first the details on how to get there.

By Air

Most international flights go to one of two or three airports: Nordela Airport for Ponta Delgada in São Miguel; Lajes Airport in Terceira; or

occasionally to Santa Maria. Two other islands have small airports that are visited by internal flights: Faial and Flores. Graciosa, São Jorge and Pico all have well advanced plans to build their own airports in the near future, but Corvo has no chance of ever having its own runway – it's too small and too mountainous. Easily the busiest is Lajes Airport, attached to the United States Air Force base, and handling most of the civil flights arriving from North America; it's about 15 miles from the capital of Terceira, Angra do Heroísmo, but only about 6 miles from the developing resort of Praia da Vitória. Nordel Airport in São Miguel is less than 3 miles from the capital, Ponta Delgada; it's smaller, with cattle grazing by the runway (tethered!) and a consequent primitive air, but the facilities are good enough.

Scheduled Flights. TAP, the Portuguese national airline, presently run all the scheduled flights to the Azores.

(a) *From the UK.* There are no direct scheduled flights from London or elsewhere in Britain; you have to go via Lisbon (either by British Airways or TAP) and change planes. Flights to Lisbon are fairly frequent though: at least one a day from both Gatwick and Heathrow. The journey time depends on how long you have to stop over in Lisbon, but averages about 4½ hours. Present one-way economy class fares to the islands are around £150, but excursion rates get you there and back for roughly £180. See also flights from Lisbon (below).

(b) *From the USA.* Direct flights to Terceira leave New York's JFK Airport at least twice a week and there are also frequent flights from Boston; Terceira is of course the island with the US military presence. As a guide to fares, an economy class excursion ticket costs around $840 in high season (May to September), $507 in winter. See also flights from Lisbon (below).

(c) *From Canada.* Direct flights to Terceira are as frequent from Canada as from the USA, both countries having a sizeable immigrant population from the Azores. There are at least two flights a week from Montreal's Mirabel Airport, more in summer. Fares are much the same as from the USA.

(d) *From Portugal.* Not surprisingly, there's a frequent and regular service between Lisbon and the islands: up to two a day to Ponta Delgada in São Miguel, one a day to Lajes Airport (Terceira). Journey time: approximately 2½ hours. Fares: an economy class single costs around 8500 escudos (roughly £70/US$125) but excursion tickets can bring the cost down to little more than the one-way trip.

(e) *From Madeira.* There are twice-weekly flights from Funchal Airport to Ponta Delgada, lasting less than 2 hours. Fares: Approximately 5700

escudos one-way (£46/US$80) with reductions for excursion tickets.

Charter Flights and Package Tours. Until the Azores are more firmly established on the tourist map, the choice of charter flights is small and limited mainly to the 'high season' (April to October). Travel agents can usually point you in the right direction, and the Portuguese Tourist Office can sometimes help. Two British companies offering package holidays in the Azores are Portugal Holidays (34 Ivor Place, London NW1; tel. 01-408 1127) and Suntours (Madeira House, Corn Street, Witney, Oxon; tel. Witney 71181).

Inter-Island Flights. An excellent small airline called SATA (Sociedade Açoriana de Transportes Aérios) runs the inter-island air service. It was started up by the Bensaúde family (see above in history section), who seem to have a finger in every Azorean pie. The planes are few and busy; advance reservations are essential. There are SATA offices at all the airports and in the island capitals, but the head office is in São Miguel (Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, Ponta Delgada; tel. 22 311). Schedules vary slightly from summer to winter but a rough guide as to frequency and cost is given below. Note that the planes hop from one island to another, visiting the islands en route like a bus service; if you want to go from Santa Maria to Flores, for example, you have to go via São Miguel, Terceira and Faial. (NB: the prices shown below are one-way adult fares; children pay half price, return fares are double the single fare.)

between. . .-and. . .	frequency	journey time	approx fare
ponta Delgada/Terceira	2 or 3 x day	40 mins	£26/$47
Ponta Delgada/Sta Maria	1 or 2 x day	30 mins	£18/$32
Ponta Delgada/Horta (Faial)	2 x day	2 hrs	£29/$52
Ponta Delgada/Flores	2 x week	3 hrs	£30/$54
Terceira/Horta (Faial)	2 x day	40 mins	£26/$47
Terceira/Flores	2 x week	2 hrs	£30/$54
Horta (Faial)/Flores	2 x week	1 hr	£28/$51

By Sea

Apart from occasional Atlantic cruises and cargo vessels that visit the Azores, the only shipping line running a regular service is CTM

(Companhia Portuguesa de Transportes Marítimos), who sail from Lisbon. For details, write to their head office:

Rua de São Julião 63
PO Box 2747
118 Lisbon Codex
(tel. 366 621)

CTM also operate the inter-island ferry (see below).

Royal Viking Line do an annual cruise from Malaga in Spain via Gibraltar and Tangier to Horta (Faial) and thence to New York. The addresses of their head offices are:

(a) in the UK: Union Lloyd Ltd, 50 Curzon Street, London W1.
(b) in the USA: Royal Viking Line, 15th Floor, 630 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10020.

Inter-Island Sailings. There is presently only one boat, the *Ponta Delgada*, operating between the islands, although a small launch also runs between Faial and Pico (see below). The *Ponta Delgada* leaves the port of Ponta Delgada in São Miguel at 10 pm on Mondays, arrives at Angra do Heroísmo (Terceira) at 7 am on Tuesdays, then visits Vila da Praia (Graciosa), Vila das Velas (São Jorge) and Lajes do Pico (Pico) before arriving at Horta (Faial) at 6.30 on the Tuesday night. When justified by the number of passengers, the boat may then proceed to Ponta do Pesqueiro (Corvo) and either Santa Cruz or Lajes in Flores on the Wednesday. Otherwise it remains in Horta until starting the return trip at 8 am on Thursdays, visiting the same islands in reverse order and reaching Ponta Delgada again at 8 am on Friday mornings.

The round trip (São Miguel to Faial and back again) costs around £25/US$45. For details, see any travel agent in the island (*agéncias de viagens*, e.g. Agencia Ornelas, with offices in Angra do Heroísmo and Ponta Delgada) or go to the main CTM offices in São Miguel: Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, Ponta Delgada (tel. 26 301).

Between Horta in Faial and Madalena in Pico, there is a frequent ferryboat (passengers only: it's not much bigger than a motorized dinghy!) run by Empresa das Lanchas do Pico who boast of having the most punctual transport service in all the archipelago; their offices are to be found at the quayside in the two ports. There are three or four half-hour crossings a day in summer, fewer in winter (and rough seas sometimes stop the crossings altogether). The price per adult is around 30 pence or 55 cents.

Also, if you're lucky you may be able to find a man with a boat to take you to Corvo from Flores, but in bad weather the idea is simply not on; the 'port' in Corvo is nothing more than a collection of slippery

rocks, and it's impossible to land.

Getting About. The choice is basically between hiring a car or taking a taxi. Buses are very infrequent, in some places non-existent, and coach trips laid on for the few tourists in summer (ask at the Tourist Office or travel agencies) are neither numerous nor very exciting. Taxis are plentiful in the main centres of population, and reasonably cheap, though it's wise to settle the price in advance when making a tour of the island. But in Flores, for example, there is at present a grand total of six taxis, one of which was at the garage in the summer of '81...

Car hire agencies are to be found in all the islands save Flores and Corvo, most abundantly in São Miguel.

In São Miguel:
Avis/Ilha Verde, at the airport (23 510).
Avis/Ilha Verde, Praça 5 Outubro 19, Ponta Delgada (25 200).
Avis/Ilha Verde, Ribeira Grande (42 456).
Avis/Ilha Verde, Furnas (54 104).
Micauto, Avenida Infante Dom Henrique 109, Ponta Delgada (24 382).
Micauto, Ribeira Grande (42 121).
Micauto, Furnas (54 254).

In Terceira:
Açorauto, Dr Alex Ramos 12, Praia da Vitória (52 373).

In Santa Maria: Avis/Ilha Verde, at the airport (82 371).
(NB: Costs and conditions are the same as in Madeira; see section above on Madeira Archipelago.)

Driving conditions are generally good in all the islands and improving all the time, though the network is not exactly extensive and minor roads are often just sandy tracks. Many sights are accessible only on foot, leaving the car behind: if in doubt, get out – or you too may find yourself stranded up a mountain with a broken axle and no one to summon for aid.

3 Where to Stay

São Miguel, p248 Terceira, p249 Faial, p250 Flores, p250 Pico, p250 Santa Maria, p250 Graciosa, São Jorge, Corvo, p251

Having read thus far, you'll have gathered that there is a relative lack of accommodation in the Azores. What few hotels there are tend to be very full, especially in summer (it's essential to make reservations well in advance), which is a sign of the burgeoning tourist industry. São Miguel leads the field in terms of hotel accommodation, whereas Corvo is a complete non-runner – there is no hotel, not even a boarding house on this tiniest island. While the developers hover and plan, and the local government girds its loins to face the onslaught of tourism, there is presently a dire lack of choice for the visitor. Even in Terceira, one of the largest and most developed islands, the traveller is hard put to find a room – but Terceira is a special case. After the 1980 earthquake which caused such dreadful destruction in Angra do Heroismo, the capital, Terceira was flooded by architects, engineers, construction workers and all the people needed to put the city together again; as a result, all the surviving hotels and boarding houses were filled with these long term guests, and they are likely to remain for another year or two until the island is back on its feet as it were.

Nevertheless, the islanders are enormously welcoming and it's very often possible to find temporary lodgings in private homes. Some of the Tourist Offices have lists of addresses; in Angra do Heroismo, for instance, they provide a detailed catalogue of names of landladies, whether they speak English or not, what facilities they can offer and

what prices they charge (e.g. 250 escudos/£2/$3.50 per person per night for a basic room or 900 escudos/£7.50/$13 for a self-contained flatlet). And wherever you go it's possible to find rooms by asking around; at the airport, for example, there is often someone who knows someone whose sister-in-law has a spare room.

Camping is certainly an alternative for visitors bringing their own equipment, but don't expect any chic Club Mediterranée type arrangements. The Tourist Offices can usually suggest good sites, or you can choose your own and then check with local people that there is no objection.

Hotel classification and prices are the same as in Madeira. Many of the boarding houses here are *residenciales* – i.e. residential only, no meals served except breakfast – and the lack of in-house restaurant should be a guide to the general shortage of other facilities: these places tend to be very plain indeed.

São Miguel

(a) in Ponta Delgada

4 Hotel de São Pedro, Largo Almirante Dunn (22 223). The best hotel in the archipelago, the São Pedro also happens to be a historic monument, an early 19th century mansion which used to be a convent, was once the home of Thomas Hickling (see text), and became US Naval HQ during World War II. It's now decorated in elegant Georgian colonial style, with antiques, open fires in winter, and a real air of gracious living. The cuisine is excellent, the wine cellar too, and restaurant and bar are both open to non-residents.

4 Hotel Avenida, Avenida Infante Dom Henrique (27 331). A modern hotel, also with excellent services, soon to have its own swimming pool.

3 Hotel do Infante, Avenida Infante Dom Henrique (23 331). Overlooking the harbour.

3 Casa das Palmeiras, Rua Diário dos Açores 26 (22 621). Residential only. The hotel itself is charming, its red roof and turrets constituting a local landmark, but the rooms are of variable quality.

3 Residencial Central, Rua Machado dos Santos 82 (24 491). Central, claims to be the oldest guest-house in the islands.

3 Residencial América, Manuel Ignácio Correia 58 (24 351).

3 Apart-Hotel Alcides, Rua Hintze Ribeiro 67 (26 197). A friendly, comfortable establishment comprising several self contained flatlets.

3 Residencial São Miguel, Rua Dr Bruno Tavares Carneiro 28

(26 086).
3 Residencial Sete Cidades, Rua do Contador 20 (27 344).
3 Residencial Ilha Verde, Rua Cabacas 24 (24 735).
2 Residencial Perieira, Largo Matriz 67-2° (25 678).
2 Residencial Roma, Rua de Melo 53-2° (25 074).
2 Residencial Açoreana, Largo Matriz 68 (25 399),
2 Pensão Matriz, Rua Hintze Ribeiro 17 (25 915).
2 Pensão Central, Rua do Coronel Chaves 31 (26 183).

(b) in the rest of the island
3 Apart-Hotel Barracuda, Praia das Milicias, São Roque (27 421). This attractive modern block of comfortable self contained apartments is only $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from town, right beside the beach.
3 Apart-Hotel Loreto Sol, Largo do Loreto, Fajã de Baixo (27 281). Another most attractive complex of self-contained apartments, some 4 miles from Ponta Delgada, the Loreto-Sol is recommended for 'Honey mooners, Recovery from Stress, Rest for all Ages'!
3 Caloura Motel, Lagoa (93 240). On the coast about 8 miles from Ponta Delgada, this small privately owned hotel in a magnificent setting has every modern convenience inlcuding car-hire facilities.
3 Hotel Terra Nostra, Padre José Botelho, Furnas (54 133). Owned by the Bensaúde group of companies like the São Pedro, this 1930s Art Deco building is quite different in architectural style but otherwise comparable in every respect: superb service, cuisine, comfort. It backs onto a beautiful park with a natural warm-water swimming pool.

Terceira

(a) in Angra do Heroísmo
4 Residencial Cruzeiro, Praça Dr Sousa Junior (24 071). Modern, comfortable and friendly, with its own restaurant attached.
3 Hotel de Angra, Praça Restauração (24 041). Small central and comfortable, with a good restaurant overlooking the Parque Duque de Terceira.

(b) in the rest of the island
4 Estalagem da Serreta, Serreta (96 253). A luxurious hotel (6 rooms only) in splendid isolation with magnificent views down over the west coast. Currently closed (1981).
3 Motel Nove Ilhas, Cabo da Praia (53 135). A comfortable apartment complex with all mod cons and well situated: under 2

miles from the pretty little town of Praia da Vitória, 4 miles from the airport, near an excellent beach and not far from the golf course.

Faial

4 Hotel Fayal, Rua Consul Dabney, Horta (22 181). Like the São Pedro and Terra Nostra in São Miguel, the Fayal belongs to the Bensaúde group of companies; not quite matching their standards of excellence, this group of barrack-like villas set in an attractive private estate nevertheless has an excellent restaurant (with magnificent views across to Pico), a popular bar, swimming pool, tennis courts and a discothèque.

4 Estalagem Santa Cruz, Rua Vasco da Gama, Horta (23 021). Right beside the harbour, this beautiful hotel is a restored 16th-century fortress with every modern comfort.

3 Residencial São Francisco, Rua Conselheiro Medeiros 13, Horta (22 597). Plain but comfortable, all rooms with private bath, some with terraces and views across to Pico.

2 Residencial do Infante, Rua Conselheiro Medeiros 1, Horta (22 837).

Flores

– 'Hotel Santa Cruz'/Cercle-Mess, Santa Cruz (22 469). This isn't really a hotel at all, it's the French meteorological base and priority is naturally given to French personnel and visiting officials, but the excellent facilities are sometimes available for use by tourists for very reasonable prices.

3 Pousada das Lajes, Fazenda das Lajes (66). Simple but comfortable, with own restaurant and bar.

Pico

3 Residencial Pico/Garcia, Rua Biscoitos, Madalena (62 392). On main road out of Madalena, this very attractive and comfortable small hotel (all rooms with bath and terrace) has its own restaurant close by.

2 Residencial Mini-Bela, Avenida Machada Serpa, Madalena (62 86). Very simple but adequate.

2 Residencial Açor, Lajes do Pico (67 438).

2 Pensão Gomes, Estrada Nacional, São Roque (64 243).

Santa Maria

2 Hotel do Aeroporto, at the airport (82 132). Very plain, but it's all there is in the island.

Graciosa, São Jorge, Corvo
No hotel accommodation in these islands, but it's possible to find private guest-houses (*casas de hóspedes*) or individuals willing to share their homes with visitors. Ask at the port, or in cafés, bars, etc.

4 Wining, Dining and Nightlife

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Cuisine

As in Madeira, regional cuisine in the Azores is characterized by its freshness; virtually everything on the table is grown in the islands – fresh meat and dairy produce, fresh vegetables and fruit, and most of all fish, the staple item on the menu. And again like Madeira, the typical local dishes are very simply prepared, relying on good plain cooking rather than elaborate recipes. Similarly, if the visiting gourmet wants fancy surroundings, he's come to the wrong place. The restaurants, such as there are, tend to be very unpretentious places: friendly and casual, yes; formal, no. Some of the best restaurants are those in the hotels. As yet they do not have that bland flavour that comes with having to cater for tourists of all nationalities and tastes. What they put in front of you is basically what can be found in other restaurants, only better presented. Even if the menu is in French, the dishes will be Azorean-Portuguese – which means pretty much the same as in Madeira (see section on Madeira Archipelago).

Two exceptions are that the Azores have an excellent variety of shellfish (*mariscos*) and cheeses (*queijos*) made from goats' milk, ewes' milk and cows' milk. Breakfast is commonly served with a little round white pat of moist creamy cheese called *queijinho*; slightly salty but

delicious, it's a great way to wake up one's palate. *Queijadas*, by the way, are cheesecakes or tartlets filled with rich sweet cream cheese and flavoured with almonds or spices; *queijadas de Vila Franca* (in São Miguel) are famous throughout the archipelago.

Wines and other Drinks

Although the Azores do produce their own wine, it's only in relatively small quantities, and familiar Portuguese wines make up most of the wine list. Of all the local wines, the most famous are *vinho verdelho do Pico*, from Pico's black soil - and wines from the districts of Biscoitos and Porto Martins in Terceira.

Again like Madeira, the Azores have a variety of fruit liqueurs including *licor de maracujá* (passionfruit) and *lico de ananaz* (pineapple), and fiery white rum (*aguardente branca*) best drunk at a gulp like medicine – in fact, the locals maintain that 'it's good for the digestion', on the kill-or-cure principle perhaps. *Aguardente da Graciosa* (from the island of Graciosa) is reputedly the top quality.

Spirits are available in most hotels, including familar brands of gin, vodka and whisky, the latter being the current fashionable drink despite costing over £1/$1.80 a shot. Beer made locally (*cerveja*) is like lager, light and refreshing and relatively cheap. In the soft drinks range, there is the ubiquitous Coca-Cola and Pepsi, of course, plus a variety of fizzy *sumos* made from the juices of pineapple, passionfruit, oranges etc, and freshly squeezed fruit juices too: once you've tasted the real thing, you'll never want to go back to canned pineapple juice.

Restaurants

As well as hotel restaurants (see previous chapter), there are plenty of restaurants or at least snack-bars to choose from in the main islands, a more limited selection in out-of-the-way places. Most restaurants are open from noon till 3 pm and again from 6 pm to 9 pm, cafés and bars from 7 am to 11 pm.

São Miguel

(a) in Ponta Delgada
Alcides, Rua Hintze Ribeiro 71.

Bom Apetite, Rua Tavares de Resendes 48 (closed Monday).
Boa Vista, Bairro da Boa Vista.
Bula-Bula Snack-Bar, Largo Teatro.
O Corisco, Rua Manuel da Ponte 28.
Coliseu, Avenida Roberto Ivens.
Cervejaria Melo Abreu, Avenida Roberto Ivens.
Friagem, Rua do Aljube 14.
Garcia, Rua Tavares de Resendes 8.
O Roberto, Avenida Infante Dom Henrique 14.
Sagres, Rua da Cruz 17.
Solar Açoreana, Rua Engenheiro José Cordeiro 55.
Solar da Graça, Rua do Mercado 46. Excellent food, very popular.
Café Açoreana, Rua Diário dos Açores 13.
Café Esperança, Rua Dr Mont Alverne de Sequeira 11.
Café-Pastelaria, O Gil, Rua Diário dos Açores 20.
Café Lis, Rua Machado dos Santos 65.
Café Nacional, Rua Açoreana Oriental 18.

(b) around the island
Caldeiras, Caldeiras da Ribeira Grande.
Casarão, Rua do Pilar, Fajã de Cima.
Casa Velha, Vila Pann, Pópulo de Cima, Livramento (closed Sundays).
Cavalo Branco, Santa Bárbara – Capelas (closed Mondays).
O Carlos, Largo do Rossio 20, Capelas.
O Jaime, Rua Direita, Vila Franca do Campo.
O Jardim, Largo de Dom João I 5, Povoação.
O Retiro, Rua do Hotel, Furnas.
Samanica, Largo da Igreja Nova, Furnas.
American Bar, Estrada Nacional, Ribeirinha, Ribeira Grande (open summer only).
O Fuzeiro, Rua Sousa e Silva 33, Ribeira Grande.
Cervejaria Sá, Largo Gaspar Frutuoso, Ribeira Grande.
Açoreano, Dr Oliveira Sambento 2, Ribeira Grande.
Marisqueria Regional, Avenida Gaspar Fructuso, Santa Cruz, Lagoa.

Terceira

(a) in Angra do Heroísmo
Adega Lusitânia, Rua 25 de Abril 63.
Bambu, Rua de São João 45.
Confiança, Rua de Santo Espírito 102.
Dino's Bar, Rua de Lisboa 26 (closed Wednesdays).
Graciosa, Rua Minhas Terras 12.

Machado, Rua da República 165.
Marcelino's Bar, Rua de São João 49.
Pico, Rua de Santo Espírito 106.
José da Lata, Rua de São João 69.
Snack-Bar Cruzeiro, Praça Dr Sousa Júnior.

(b) around the island
O Caniço, on main road into São Mateus (closed Wednesdays). Superb cuisine, specializing in seafood but try their Bife Marré – steak cooked in coffee and cream!
Adega de São Mateus, São Mateus.
Bar-Mar de São Mateus, São Mateus.
Arcada, Avenida Beira Mar, Praia da Vitória.
Botequim Estrela, Caminho Santa Margarida, Praia da Vitória.
Churrasqueria Praiense, Rua da Alfândega, Praia da Vitória.
José Adelino Silva, Rua Jesus 3, Praia da Vitória.
Central, Travessa Formosa 1, Praia da Vitória.
Armandinho, Praia da Vitória.
Girassol, Praia da Vitória.
Bento Calhoca, Praia da Vitória.
Sousa, Praia da Vitória.
Estrela Dourada, Praça, São Sebastião.
Sociedade Comércio Carreiro, Biscoitos: Not so much a restaurant, more a wine bar where you can sample the local wines.

Faial
O Capitólio, Rua Conselheiro Medeiros 23, Horta (closed Saturdays).
Central, Rua Serpa Pinto 15, Horta.
Europa, Praça República 7, Horta.
O Lima, Rua Serpa Pinto 9, Horta.
Praia Mar, Largo Coronel Silva Leal, Praia do Almoxarife, Horta.
Solmar, Rue Conceição, Horta.
O Tripeiro, Rua Consul Miguel da Silveira 24, Horta (closed Mondays)
Café Voga, Jardim Infante Dom Henrique, Horta.

Pico
Açor, Rua José P. Macedo, Madalena.
Garcia, Rua Biscoitos, Madalena.
Golfinho, Rua Carlos Dabney, Madalena.
Café Leal, Areia Larga, Madalena.
Lagoa, Praça São Pedro, Lajes.
Bar Azul, Pontas Negras, Ribeiras.

Cadete, Rua Poçò, São Roque.
Casa Ancora, Cais do Pico, São Roque.
Marinheiro, Rùa Poço, São Roque.

Flores
Açor, Rua Dr Armas Silveira, Santa Cruz.
Chez Adélia, Rua Dr Armas Silveira, Santa Cruz.
Café Braga, Santa Cruz.
Estalagem, Fazenda das Lajes, Lajes.

São Jorge
Cafe Pasto Beira Mar, Largo Dr João Pereira, Velas.
Solmar, Almirante Candido Reis, Velas.
Velense, Velas.

Santa Maria
Snack-Bar Mascote (at the airport).
O Morcego, Rua Teófilo Braga, Vila Porto.
Soturmar, Praia Formosa.
Café Atlantida, Vila do Porto.
Tony's Bar, Vila do Porto.

Nightlife

Nightclubs, discothèques, neon lights flashing, loud music pouring out of bars and cafés... The islanders are quiet, hard-working, god-fearing souls – what would they want with any of these? And there isn't a sufficient influx of tourists yet to make such places worthwhile. A few customers trickle through: sailors who want a change from oilskins and eating in the ship's mess, commercial travellers needing to relax after a hard day's selling, even Azorean *emigrantes* who have returned from Boston and feel like showing their friends what fun money can bring. So there are one or two places willing to import modern pop records and strobe lights, mostly in São Miguel and Terceira. Apart from the establishments listed below, a few hotels have their own nightclubs or discos, usually open only in summer; floorshows tend to be *folclórico* rather than international cabaret, however.

São Miguel
Ipanema, Vila Pann, Pópulo de Cima, Livramento (attached to the Casa

rs -Velha restaurant, open 10.30 pm to 4 am; closed Sundays).
O Forno, Avenida Conselheiro Pocas Falcao, Lagoa.
Cheers.
Rocha Quebrada.
Arcadia Club, Rua dos Mercadores 8, Ponta Delgada (mainly gays; open till 2 am).

Terceira
Twins Discoteca, Rua Diogo de Teive 54, Silveira, Angra do Heroísmo (open 9 pm to 2 or 3 am; closed Mondays). Said to be the best disco in the Azores. Blue jeans not allowed.

5 Miscellanea

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Much of the general information that travellers need to know about the Azores is the same as for Madeira; although both archipelagos are Autonomous Regions, they are both effectively Portuguese and so currency notes and national holidays for example are identical. To avoid repetition, therefore, the reader should refer to the relevant chapter in Part II: The Madeira Archipelago.

Money

There is no shortage of places to cash travellers' cheques: *bancos* (banks) and *caixas* (savings banks) can be found in all the bigger towns, and in many quite small villages too, though there are virtually no exchange bureaux. As in Madeira, the banks are open Monday to Friday, 9 am to mid-day and from 1 or 2.30 till 2 or 3.30 pm. Note, however, that credit cards are not yet widely accepted, only in the main hotels and travel agencies; as an indication of what to expect, travellers arriving at Ponta Delgada airport are greeted by a prominent *handpainted* advertisement for Access.

Health

Visitors to the Azores are recommended to take out medical insurance before leaving home – not because there are any nasty endemic diseases, but because medical facilities here are somewhat deficient. As healthy as the climate is, and however slim the chances of being bitten by anything worse than a mosquito, there is always the possibility of an accident and it is a long way home to Britain or North America. (See also under Madeira.)

Problems

Most problems, fortunately, are of the variety that can be sorted out by hotel or tourist office: how to get from A to B, where to buy an umbrella, who to see about hiring a boat etc. Hotel staff, travel agents and a few others usually do speak English, but it's no use expecting policemen to understand why you ran into the donkey cart, for example, unless you happen to speak some Portuguese; this applies particularly in less developed islands where foreign travellers seldom go.

Consulates. Obviously, with so few foreign nationals to be cared for, there is very little need for consular officials. At present, the only consulate in the islands is the American one in São Miguel (Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, Ponta Delgada; tel. 23 081).

Emergencies. Each of the islands has its own emergency telephone numbers, different in each town. For example:

	Fire	Hospital	Police
São Miguel: Pta Delgada	22 578	22 322	22 022
Ribeira Grande	42 318	42 128	42 120
Terceira: Angra do Heroísmo	22 065	22 121	22 022
Praia da Vitória	—	52 122	52 022
Faial: Horta	22 333	22 122	22 022

Tourist Information

For addresses of Portuguese National Tourist Offices in the UK, USA and Canada, see under Madeira. In these islands the three principal tourist offices are at the following addresses:

São Miguel: Delegacão de Turismo, Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, Ponta Delgada (25 152).
Terceira: Delegação de Turismo (temporarily housed in a Portacabin since the earthquake), Largo do Prior Crato, Angra do Heroismo.
Faial: Delegação de Turismo, Rua Conselheiro Medeiros, Horta (22 237).

These offices can also provide information on the other islands in their district: i.e. São Miguel's office also has information on Santa Maria, Terceira's office on Graciosa and São Jorge, Faial's office on Pico, Flores and Corvo. The airports too have small but useful information kiosks (but manned only in summer).

Post Office/Telephone

The main post offices (*correios*) are shown below:

São Miguel: Rua Dr L. de Bettencourt/corner of Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, Ponta Delgada.
Terceira: Rua Duque Palmela/corner of Largo Prior Crato, Angra do Heroismo.
Faial: Largo da Matriz/corner of Rua E. Rebelo, Horta. there are branch offices in most towns and stamps can also be bought at tobacconist shops.

The telephone system is still rather antiquated and inefficient; if you really need to make a call outside the islands, be prepared for long delays. (See also under Madeira.)

Local Festivals

In addition to the public holidays (see under Madeira), banks, shops etc are sometimes closed for local *festas*, particularly in summer, though the

islanders conveniently tend to reserve their celebrations for the nearest appropriate Sunday. Mainly religious in nature, these festivals often consist of *romaria* (pilgrimage) to some church or chapel, involving processions of men, women and children in traditional costume and accompanied by generally restrained displays of folk music and dancing.

The one outstanding festival, celebrated in all the islands, is the *Festa do Espírito Santo* (Feast of the Holy Spirit). The origins of this festival are obscure, but there's no doubting its deep significance to the islanders. Wherever you go in the Azores there are scores of little *imperios* or chapels honouring the Holy Spirit, visited by pilgrims during the Espírito Santo celebrations. These are held at different times in different islands, anywhere between Whit Sunday (fifth Sunday after Easter) and the end of August, beginning with a spectacular ceremony in Ponta Delgada (São Miguel). The focus of this ceremony is the Convento da Esperança and much venerated image of Senhor Santo Cristo dos Milagros ('of the Miracles'). The statue is kept semi-veiled in the convent for 364 days a year, only seeing the light of day on this one occasion, when it is dressed in fine cloth and jewels, decorated with flowers and displayed to the thousands of assembled pilgrims. Ponta Delgada is suitably festooned with illuminations and bunting, and the streets are covered with flower carpets (as in the Canaries, where the custom seems to have begun).

Flower carpets are a feature of several festivals, notably for the *Procissão dos Enfermos* (Procession of the Sick) in Furnas, São Miguel. Pine needles and azalea blossoms are packed tightly into wooden frames so as to leave a floral design on the road when the frames are lifted. Then a long procession winds through the town, the priest and his entourage following the colourful trail to the homes of the ill and infirm to bless them.

Of quite a different nature are the bloodless bullfights of Terceira, held throughout the summer months. Bulls are raised especially for baiting, noble black animals dotting the pastures of the island, and the choosing of the best bulls to be entered for a *tourada* is accompanied by great festivity. Families gather in the fields for boozy picnics and general merrymaking while the experts auction off the chosen sacrificial victims. There are two types of *tourada:* the typical Portuguese bullfight in which young men jump into the ring to display their courage (but not to kill the beast), and the *tourada à corda* in which the bull has a rope round its neck; six men hang onto the rope for dear life while it races through the streets, pursuing the show-offs who prod it with sticks, umbrellas, or whatever comes to hand.

One other major festival is the *Semana do Mar* (Week of the Sea) held every August in Horta, Faial, when yachtsmen from all over the

Atlantic congregate for sailing regattas round the islands.

Shopping

Ponta Delgada in São Miguel is the principal shopping centre in the Azores, with the best selection of shops in the archipelago; it even has one or two souvenir shops and a large supermarket (Rua Marques da Praia), looking very out of place in the narrow cobbled streets and among old-fashioned shops. Angra do Heroismo in Terceira is not far behind, despite the effects of the 1980 earthquake, and Praia da Vitória is the best place for souvenir-hunting in the islands: it's the nearest town to the US Air Force Base.

Local Specialities. The Azoreans' most famous craft is their embroidery work (*bordados*), typically using blue thread on white cloth. Heavy linen bedspreads and tablecloths made from flax grown in the islands are another speciality, as are the thick, brightly coloured woollen jackets. As in Madeira, basketwork (*obra de Vîmes)* is on sale everywhere, and there are the usual cheerful ceramics so typical of the Portuguese craftsman. And unique to the Azores are the whaling souvenirs, from scrimshaws to full-size harpoons. Scrimshaws are a dying art, involving the whittling and etching of whale bone and teeth, usually with scenes representing the romantic struggle between man and the sea, harpooner and whale.

Food. Visitors who choose a self-catering holiday in the apartment hotels have no trouble finding fresh meat, fish, dairy produce, vegetables, fruit etc, either in local shops or at the nearest market. Familiar packaged goods, however, are seldom available, so if you simply cannot live without Wakey-Wakey Corn Crisps in the morning, remember to take a supply with you. Prices of virtually everything that is not imported are comparatively cheap by our standards, although inflation affects the Azores just like every other part of the modern world.

Sport

The warm blue ocean is a major attraction, of course, for enthusiasts of sailing, deep-sea diving and fishing; currents and winds can be unpredictable, however, and this should be warning enough for timid or

inexperienced sailors. But for those who know what they're about, the Azores offer unparalleled opportunities, especially for big game fishing. The waters around these islands are rich in tuna, marlin, swordfish, barracuda, shark, conger eels and all manner of good fighting fish, particularly around the **Ilhéus Formigas** the rocky islets between **São Miguel** and **Santa Maria**. Several travel agencies (*agenĉias de viagens*) have information on equipment and boats for hire, such as Agência Ornelas (Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, Ponta Delgada, oro da Matriz 69, Ponta Delgada, Rua da República 167 in Angra do Heroismo, or Rua Serpa Pinto 33 in Praia da Vitória). The specialists in São Miguel are Pescatur (Rua João Francisco Cabral, 49-1°, Ponta Delgada).

Swimming conditions are ideal, whether from rocky coves or sandy beaches, in calm freshwater lagoons or even in the warm ferruginous waters of thermal baths. Swimming pools are not numerous, though there are several natural sea-water pools that have been turned into safe bathing areas by the discreet addition of a bit concrete, notably at **Biscoitos (Terceira)** and on the islet off **Vila Franca do Campo** in **São Miguel** (a small boat is usually available to ferry you across). The beaches themselves vary from black volcanic shingle to fine golden sand, such as those at **Pópulo** (black) and **Agua de Alto** (golden) in **São Miguel**, or the vast white beach of **Praia da Vitória** in Terceira (*praia* is the Portuguese word for beach).

Golfing fans too can practise their eagles and birdies amid beautiful pastoral scenery; there are two golf courses in the islands, one in **Terceira** (at Queimadas: 18 holes) and one in **São Miguel** (at Furnas: 9 holes).

Maps

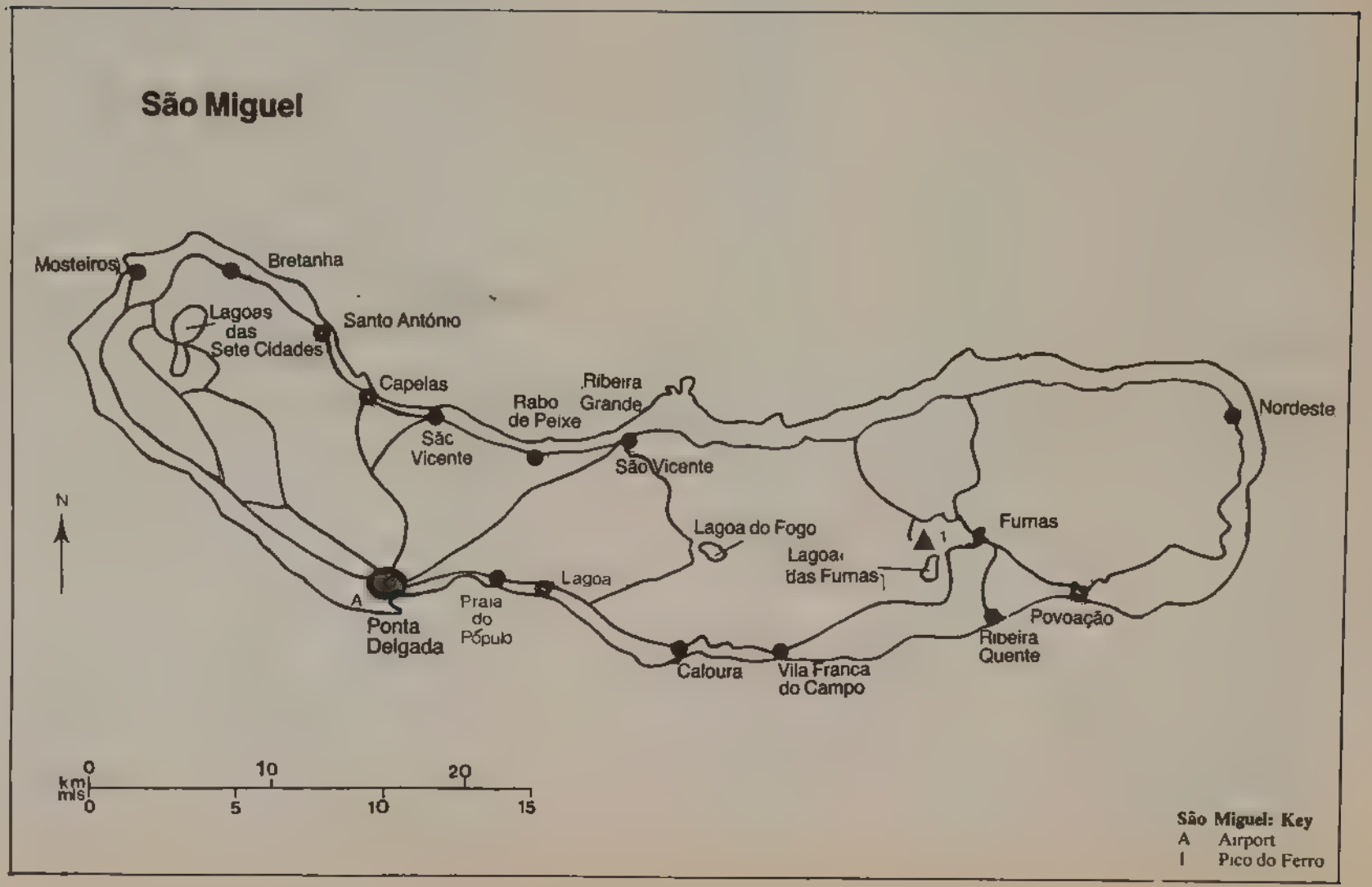
Apart from the naval charts, the best maps of the islands are published by Instituto Geográfico e Cadastral in Lisbon, available from bookshops in the islands or from specialist map stores in the UK and North America.

6 São Miguel

Ponta Delgada, p266 Around the Island, p269

This delightful island of every shade of green has appropriately become known as *A Ilha Verde*, 'the Green Island'. Fertile soil and warm moist climate combine to produce ideal growing conditions for every kind of crop, and the characteristic landscape is an undulating patchwork quilt of fields and pastures, rising here and there in a knobbly volcanic cone. Volcanic activity in São Miguel is nowadays confined to more acceptable manifestations than the terrible earthquakes and eruptions of past centuries; hot springs and sulphurous gases bubble and smoke from the Furnace valley floors, but in such glorious verdant countryside that any infernal associations seem to evaporate among the flowers and leaves of azaleas, camellias and ferns.

But São Miguel has much more than natural beauty; of all the Azores it is the most developed, the most populated and the most frequently visited by tourists. It's also the largest island in the archipelago, about 290 square miles in area, and with Santa Maria forms the eastern district or province, the capital of which is Ponta Delgada. These were the first islands to be 'discovered' by the Portuguese; it's known that São Miguel had at least a few inhabitants by 1443 and one of the first communities was Povoação ('Settlement') on the south-east coast. But not only Portuguese came to settle in this island; Bretons were among the early colonists, their presence remembered in various place names such as the village of Bretanha. Traces of their cultural influence are still perceptible today, most notably in the local accent – even the non linguist can detect those rolling French 'r's, and the Terceirans go so far as to complain


São Miguel
Mosteiros
Bretanha
Lagoas das Sete Cidades
Santo António
Capelas
Rabo de Peixe
Ribeira Grande
São Vicente
São Vicente
Nordeste
Lagoa do Fogo
Furnas
Lagoa das Furnas
Lagoa
A
Ponta Delgada
Praia do Pópulo
Povoação
Ribeira Quente
Caloura
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São Miguel: Key
A Airport
I Pico do Ferro

that they can't understand what the Micaelenses (people of São Miguel) are saying, calling them *japoneses*, literally 'Japanese' or the equivalent of what we mighty call those who speak 'double dutch'.

Despite the rich soil and favourable climate, however, progress was slow for the early colonists. The first communities and villages grew up along the coasts, as access to the interior was impeded by dense natural vegetation, and repeated seismic activity and eruptions naturally tended to scare off potential settlers. In was Terceira that initially developed most rapidly of all the Azores, partly thanks to its excellent natural port at Angra, while São Miguel lagged far behind until the 19th century. Then, in the 1860s, the port of Ponta Delgada received a boost with the building of an artificial breakwater, and gradually São Miguel began to catch up. Most of the roads date from only 30 years ago, and the airport was inaugurated as recently as 1969 (though there had been an airstrip in use since 1946 on the north coast).

Now, however, São Miguel is a flourishing success and Ponta Delgada is effectively capital of the archipelago, as well as one of the chief ports, the commercial heart of the Azores, and possessing the archipelago's only university. And with its relative abundance of hotels and variety of natural attractions, this is potentially the most westerly future tourist resort in Europe.

Ponta Delgada

The first-time visitor to Ponta Delgada is struck by the colonial atmosphere of the city, somewhere between continental Portugal and South America. Long straight streets open onto handsome squares and avenues, lined with black-and-white mosaic pavements and elegant old houses. Compared with Angra do Heroísmo in Terceira – before the earthquake, that is – Ponta Delgada has fewer grand mansions or monuments, but it does possess a certain dignified style, as yet unmarred by modern architectural monstrosities like towering office blocks or garish commercial advertisements.

São Miguel's first capital was Vila Franca do Campo further east along the coast, but when that town was all but destroyed by an earthquake in 1522 the island governors moved first to Lagoa, midway between the two, and finally to Ponta Delgada, officially acclaimed a *cidade* (city) in 1546.

Modern Ponta Delgada owes much of is prosperity to the artificial port. Construction of the long breakwater, the **Doca** or **Muelle do Porto**,

Park
Rua Dr A da Mota
Rua Tenente de Fraseado
Rua de Santo André
University
Rua Mãe de Deus
Mãe de Deus
Rua Gaspar
Rua M dos Santos
Rua do Mercado
Rua do Peru
to São Roque
to the Airport
Rua de Lisboa
Avenida Rivera
Rua Marques da Praia
Rua Misericórdia
Rua de Meio Abreu
Rua dos Mercadores
Praça 5 de Outubro
Avenida Infante Dom Henrique
Swimming pool
Rua Teófilo Braga
Ponta Delgada
N
Ponta Delgada Key
1 Igreja Matriz
2 Colegio
3 Convento
4 Igreja S. Pedro
5 Hotel S. Pedro
6 Forte S. Bras
7 Museum
8 Paço do Concelho
9 Praça Gonçalo Velho
10 Jardim A. Quental
11 Teatro
12 Market
metres 0 100 200 300
yards 0 100 200 300

was begun in the last century, but it only acquired its present length (over three quarters of a mile) in 1965. Calm waters inside the breakwater reflect the images of visiting ships – naval vessels, merchant shipping, everything down to and including small yachts boldly making the transatlantic crossing. A long promenade follows the waterfront along **Avenida Infante Dom Henrique**, a breezy stroll past offices and hotels. At the east end of the Avenida there's a public swimming pool (*piscina*) overlooked by the 17th-century **Igreja de São Pedro** (Church of St Peter) and the gracious Hotel de São Pedro, formerly a convent attached to the church. The 'mother church' or **Igreja Matriz** dedicated to São Sebastião, stands a few yards back from the waterfront in the centre of town. Dating from the early 16th century, it has been enlarged and rebuilt throughout the passing years, but still displays some pleasing original features such as the manueline arches and baroque portals. Between the church and the Avenida do Infante stand the three lonely **Arcos da Cidade** (Arches of the City), erected in 1783. These formerly stood sideways on to the church, linking it to the 17th century **Paços do Concelho**, the Town Hall, but were transferred to their present position in 1948 when the Avenida do Infante was being laid out. The small square in which they stand, **Praça de Gonçalo Velho,** is named in honour of the centre of the square in 1956. In front of the Paços do Concelho stands another statue of particular relevance: **São Miguel Arcánjel** (Archangel Michael) for whom the island was named.

The Igreja Matriz acts as a sort of imposing traffic island in the middle of **Largo da Matriz**, onto which half a dozen narrow streets open out. The main shopping area of Ponta Delgada is to the north and west, but heading east for the moment we follow the **Rua do Mercado** past the **Teatro Micaelense** (actually a cinema) to the **Mercado** itself, the main market of São Miguel. Still heading east past the excellent restaurant Solar da Graça on the right, Rua do Mercado becomes Rua do Peru; a left turn here takes you up towards the hillock and chapel of **Mãe de Deus** ('Mother of God'). The present 20th-century building replaced an earlier chapel dating from 1547 which was demolished in 1914.

Now turning west along Rua de Mãe de Deus, on your right is the **University of the Azores**, set in a large overgrown estate. It started as a university institute in 1976 and was promoted to its present status in July 1980, the only Portuguese university outside Portugal. Still heading west you soon reach the small square full of flowers and tall trees, **Jardim Antero de Quental**, one of the few green corners actually in the city (there's a good public park, however, to the north west of town). Facing onto the Jardim is the superb baroque façade of the **Colégio Todos os Santos**. Dating from 1592, the Colégio was originally a Jesuit

institution; it is presently closed for extensive restoration work but reportedly houses a beautiful early 18th-century altarpiece and fine *azulejo* panelling.

Just below the Colégio stands one of the Azores' few museums, **Museu Carlos Machado** – well worth a visit (open Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am to 12.30 and 2 to 5.30 pm; small admission fee). It stands amid pretty gardens in a beautiful 16th-century building that was once a convent; Carlos Machado, whose bust greets visitors to the museum, was the 19th-century scientist who founded the institution. At present it houses a collection of religious works destined to be removed to the Colégio when restoration work there is complete, but these are of lesser interest than the ethnographic exhibits. One room contains a life size reconstruction of a typical rural dwelling in São Miguel, such as can still be found today in certain outlying areas, and comes complete with every last detail – including a chamberpot beneath the bed. And there are displays of traditional costume, folk art, even examples of the island's early vehicles, from litters for carrying the local bigwig through muddy streets to 19th-century pennyfarthings.

Last but by no means least comes the pride of São Miguel, almost the most important building in the whole archipelago: the **Convento da Esperança.** Facing south across the **Praça 5 do Outubro** to the 16th century fortress of **Forte de São Brás** (now a military base, closed to the public), the Convento, convent and church, dates from 1541 and besides being a sumptuous building in its own right houses the sanctuary wherein is kept the venerated image of **Santo Cristo.** The story behind this image is hard to verify but tradition has it that it was given to nuns from nearby Caloura by Pope Paul III in 1536, and they brought it to the city for safekeeping and protection from pirate raids. It was credited with numerous miracles, from halting lava flows to curing acne, and is still considered today as the religious focalpoint of the Azores, reverently displayed to the public on only one day a year, Whit Sunday.

Around the Island

There's a score of easy excursions from Ponta Delgada through the peaceful green countryside and around the coast, visiting dozens of small towns and villages that are alike in their quiet charm. As you explore the island, you get a sense of travelling back in time to a pastoral age, an age of innocence. The hydrangea-lined roads are almost empty except for the occasional farmer and his donkey cart; the fields are full

of lush-looking crops, sometimes dominated by a windmill (some still functioning), and the Micaelenses pursue their agricultural business with a gentle, good-humoured curiosity as the tourist speeds through.

Heading east out of Ponta Delgada the main road leads along the coast to **São Roque,** the **Miradouro de São Roque** offering fine views down to the rocky islet off São Roque itself, called **Rosto do Cão** (Dog's Head), and east towards Lagoa. A mile or so on is the golden sandy beach of **Praia do Pópulo**, one of the best beaches in São Miguel. **Lagoa** is a small town some 7 miles from Ponta Delgada with several handsome monuments including a 17th century monastery, Convento dos Frades (rebuilt in the 18th century after an eruption in 1652) with a beautiful garden. There's also a good public swimming pool built among the rocks just below town.

Following the coast the next place of interest is **Caloura** amid small fields and vineyards reaching right to the edge of black lava cliffs, one of the island's chief wine-producing areas. Now the road becomes rather twisty, following the sinuous coastline towards **Agua d'Alto** with a popular blackish sandy beach, and to the nearby town of **Vila Franca do Campo**. Founded in 1444, Vila Franca was once the capital of São Miguel and still possesses some interesting old chuches and mansions including the Igreja de São Miguel, first 'mother church' on the island. Dating from the 15th century, it was destroyed by an earthquake in 1522 but rebuilt stone for stone exactly as before. Yet more amazing is the small church dedicated to Santo André (St Andrew) with a positively ecstatic interior of *azulejo* panels dating from the 17th century and an exuberantly gilded high altar; in this church lie the remains of one of the leading figures of São Miguel's earliest days, Rui Gonçalves da Camara, son of João Gonçalves Zarco who discovered Madeira. And off the town lies the small islet, **Ilhéu de Vila Franca**; it's a sunken crater forming a superb, perfectly circular natural swimming pool protected from Atlantic breakers by the crater's steep rocky rim; in summer at least there is usually a small boat available to ferry visitors across from Vila Franca's small quay.

East from Vila Franca, the main road now heads inland through glorious scenery to one of the São Miguel's top attractions, the **Valley of Furnas**. En route, stop at the **Lagoa das Furnas**, at first sight much like a Scottish loch surrounded by steep forested green hills. But around the northern end of the lake are a number of steaming pools of hot water – and a half-dozen curious concrete-lined holes in the ground. At weekends this is a very popular picnic spot; visitors arrive with ready-prepared casseroles, shove them down one of the holes and pack a tight wooden lid on top, then go off for a swim or to fish in the lake until the

chicken is ready five or six hours later. (If you stay at the Hotel Terra Nostra in Furnas, they'll arrange it all for you.)

Furnas itself is a mile or two away through the hills, lying in the base of a wide green crater amid a profusion of flowers and fields, one of the most picturesque sights in the whole archipelago and deserving a visit of at least a long weekend. In the 19th century this was a flourishing spa attracting wealthy Britons and Americans among others; even today people arrive with doctors' certificates to swim in the *balneario*, to take mud baths or to drink the twenty-three different sorts of spring water: cold, tepid or hot, rich in various minerals. The little town is full of small fountains individually marked with *azulejo* tiles showing the water's particular qualities, such as 'Morangueria Spring: Good for the liver'. But much more dramatic are the belching plumes of steam and sulphurous gases into the humid air. Again each *caldeira* has its own name, sometimes called after long forgotten personages, sometimes indicating its particular characteristics. Quite by contrast is the peaceful natural warm-water swimming pool in the Parque Terra Nostra. Although its opaque rusty yellow appearance, due to the presence of iron, may seem unattractive, don't be put off; medical experts may dispute the water's supposed curative properties but one visitor at least can vouch for its reviving qualities. Refreshed by a swim one may then take a leisurely stroll through the beautiful park (entrance behind Hotel Terra Nostra; small admission fee) which was initially planned and planted by the 19th century American vice-consul, Thomas Hickling. The elegant white mansion overlooking the swimming pool replaced Hickling's house, known to the locals as 'Yanqui Hall', where he and his family spent weekends and holidays away from Ponta Delgada.

From Furnas there are several very pleasant excursions round the east of the island: due south to the fishing village of **Ribeira Quente**, south east to **Povoação**, São Miguel's first settlement, and thence around the dramatic north-east coast to the picturesque small town of **Nordeste**. The south-east coast suffered particularly badly from volcanic and seismic disturbances throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, and the inhabitants of Povoação received another kind of shock in 1811 when a submarine eruption produced a tenth Azorean island just a few kilometres off the coast. The island was named **Ilha Sabrina**, but there are few records as to its size or descriptions of its appearance: all we know for sure is that it had completely vanished by the end of 1812.

But leaving Furnas by the north-west route, the traveller has a chance to stop and look back over the fertile valley as the road climbs out of the crater, and one recommended detour follows a left turn (near the golf course) to the summit of **Pico do Ferro**, its sheer flowery flanks falling

away to the green Lagoa das Furnas (see above). The main road eventually reaches the north coast and heads west towards **Ribeira Grande**, an attractive old town spanning the 'Big River' from which it gets its name. Among the abundance of historic buildings in Ribeira Grande, one church stands out: the Igreja do Espírito Santo (16th century, rebuilt mid 17th century), its façade constituting the height of baroque extravagance. From Ribeira Grande a good wide road crosses the island to Ponta Delgada about 14 miles away, while a minor road heads south east into the hills to the beautiful **Lagoa do Fogo** (Fire Lake). This lagoon lies at the bottom of a very deep crater, a peaceful green corner very much favoured by campers and weekend picnickers in summer, despite the long trail down from the road, partly because of the fine sandy beach to one side of the lake.

The stretch of road west from Ribeira Grande provides continuous lovely views of the lush northern coastline, with tea plantations (open to visitors; ask at the Tourist Office in Ponta Delgada) marking neat clearings in the dense natural vegetation. Not far from Ribeira Grande is the site of São Miguel's first airport, near **Rabo de Peixe**, disused since the opening of Ponta Delgada's airport in 1969, though there are plans to rebuild and enlarge it so that it once again becomes the island's main airport. All along this coastline are small fishing communities such as **São Vicente** and **Capelas**, the latter with a whaling factory that hums with activity in summer, the whaling season, when the pretty bay becomes a bloody scene of carnage. Further west on the main road is the **Miradouro de Santo António** offering panoramic views over **Santo António** itself and east to the bay of Capelas. At the north western tip of the island is a cluster of small villages including **Santa Bárbara**, with an excellent restaurant (Cavalo Branco), and **Bretanha**, where the Breton colonists settled. One of the principal crops grown in this area is maize, as is only too evident from the tall pyramid-shaped stacks of drying cobs in every garden.

Mosteiros ('Monasteries') on the west coast lies far below the main road on a flat tongue of lava, a small village noted chiefly for its natural rock formations, particularly the **Ilhéus 'O Frade'** and **'A Freira'** (Monk and Nun Islets) just off the coast, which do vaguely resemble a pair of stocky cloaked figures. South of here the coastal road continues round the island through several small hamlets of no particular interest, past the airport and back into Ponta Delgada.

Finally, one excursion that's virtually compulsory for tourists is into the north-west interior of São Miguel, to the **Lagoas das Sete Cidades** ('Lakes of the Seven Cities'). The two lakes are actually joined, but because of the different species of algae inhabiting their waters, one

appears bright green while the other is blue as the sky above. A road bridge crosses the narrow neck in the centre of the lakes, marking the boundary between sapphire and emerald, and it's possible to cast a leaf over the bridge into the blue lake and watch it reappear on the green lake. The lakes lie in a vast crater surrounded by steep hills and dark forests, with a small village of **Sete Cidades** itself lying on a low shelf beside the lake. Once inaccessible except on foot, the village can now be visited by motorists, though you should pause first to admire the best view of the lakes at **Vista do Rei** (where a new hotel is being built, destined to enjoy the most magnificent situation in the island), nearly 2,000 ft above sea level and more than 1,000 ft above the lakes. Then, following the rough track down through forests and heather, you can drive across the bridge between the lakes to the fantastically fertile spit of land where Sete Cidades stands amid gardens, parks and private estates. In summer the lakes attract hundreds of campers and day visitors but nothing can dent the tranquil air of this exquisitely beautiful spot, where you can almost hear the flowers unwrapping their petals.

7 Santa Maria

Vila do Porto, p275 Around the Island, p275

Only fifty-odd miles away from São Miguel is the island of Santa Maria, the most southerly and most easterly of all the Azores. Boldly proclaimed as 'The International Gateway to the Azores', it has a large airport but virtually nowhere to stay; travellers who arrive here tend to ignore Santa Maria and hurry on to neighbouring São Miguel.

It's one of the smallest islands, only 37 square miles in area, with a total population of roughly 7,500. Although first to be claimed and colonized by the Portuguese, Santa Maria never acquired the relative prosperity of the larger islands, and has therefore less in the way of noble mansions, grand churches and other historic monuments. But it does not deserve to be ignored. If you can put up with the woefully inadequate hotel accommodation, you'll be rewarded by a refreshing lack of commercial development, and most of all by an enchanting landscape of hills and valleys, forests and fields, tiny farming communities and secluded beaches.

As most visitors arrive at the **airport**, we'll begin the tour there. Built by the Americans as an Air Force base in 1944, it only came into service in July 1945 and so was barely utilized in World War II; the USA handed it over to the Portuguese government in June 1946. Now this small island can boast the second best airport in the Azores, with three long runways (as opposed to Ponta Delgada's one). SATA, the Azores' own airline, inaugurated the inter-island service in June 1947 with a flight from São Miguel to Santa Maria, and now the airport has large transatlantic jets arriving from Europe and North America. It also has

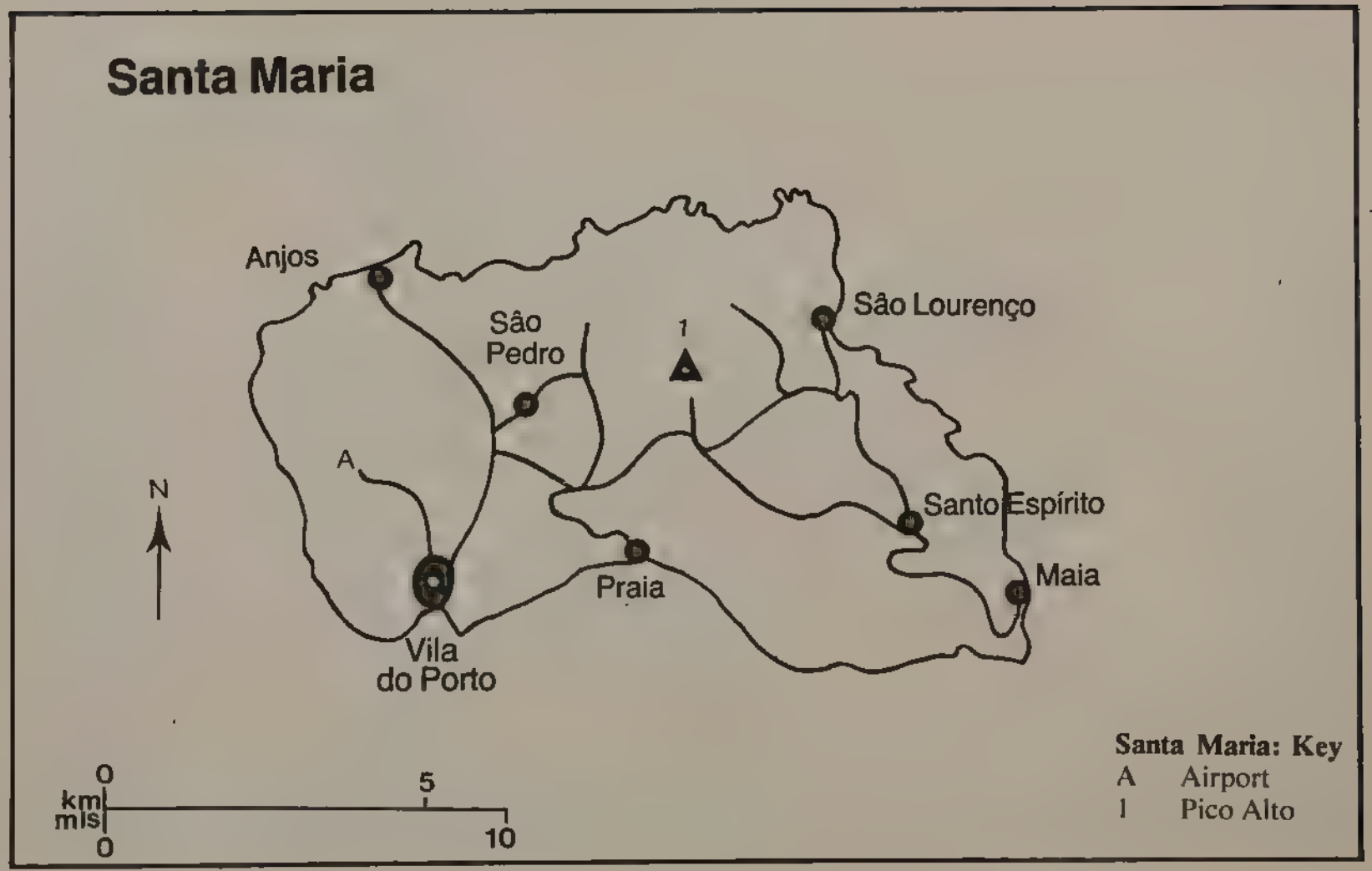
the island's one hotel, plus a good swimming pool. This western area of the island, almost wholly taken up by the airport, is relatively flat and uninteresting in landscape; Santa Maria reserves her charms for those who take the trouble to explore.

Vila do Porto

From the airport it's a short drive into Vila do Porto, the island's principal town and the first settlement in the archipelago to be designated a *vila* or town (mid 15th century). Situated in a sheltered natural harbour, you can see why the colonists chose to develop it as a port, though the waters are too shallow for large modern vessels. Indeed Porto still seems to belong to the 15th century, with cobbled streets and some of the colonists' original buildings still standing. The island's 'mother church' is the **Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Asuncão** (Our Lady of the Assumption), its square white belltower looking like a church tower in Devon that happens to have been whitewashed – there is much in these islands to remind the traveller of south-west England. Originally 15th century, the church was burnt down by pirates in 1630 and rebuilt a few years later (with 19th century additions), featuring a mixture of gothic and manueline styles. A former Franciscan convent church, **Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Vitória,** is another of Porto's proudest monuments; it contains a fine collection of *azulejo* panels (17th century) showing the miraculous deeds of St Anthony. Originally built in 1607, this church too was destroyed by pirates – twice in fact, in 1616 and 1675 – and the present building is mainly 18th/19th century. The church faces a large bronze memorial, **Padrão das Descobertas** (Monument to the Discoveries), which was erected in 1932 on the traditional anniversary of the 'discovery' of Santa Maria by Gonçalo Velho Cabral: 15 August, or Santa Maria's Day, hence the island's name. Also of interest is Porto's fortress, **Forte de São Brás,** dating from the 16th century but only recently restored after centuries of pirate attacks and gradual neglect.

Around the Island

One of the most interesting excursions in Santa Maria is to the north coast around the little fishing port of **Anjos**. This was the site of the first


Santa Maria
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Santa Maria: Key
A Airport
1 Pico Alto

church in the Azores, originally just a primitive wooden building thatched with straw, but by the early 1470s it was solidly constructed of local stone. When Columbus was sailing home from the Indies in February 1493, his ships met fierce storms off the Azores and he found shelter in Santa Maria; he and his men had vowed to say mass at Anjos in thanks for their safe delivery from the sea, but while making their way to the chapel the crew were seized by the colonists and only after some bitter wrangling did they manage to regain their freedom. The Ermida de Nossa Senhora de Anjos, to give the chapel its official title, has been rebuilt since Columbus came (late 17th-century) but it has a pleasing simplicity that he might well recognize today. Inside are more of those lovely *azulejos* (18th century), a fine 16th-century triptych and an image of Our Lady that is said to have been brought to the island by Gonçalo Velho himself in 1427 on his initial voyage to the Azores.

The central mountains, collectively known as the **Picos**, include **Pico Alto**, just under 2,000 ft, with a *miradouro* right at the top (you can drive up) offering splendid panoramic views over the whole island. Heading east towards the coast through the tidy cluster of houses that constitute the village of **Santa Bárbara** (notice the fat chimneys, a typical feature of domestic architecture in this island), there is another delightful belvedere, **Miradoura da Espigão** – 'of the waterspout': there's running water here for the convenience of picnickers – overlooking the beautiful bay and straggling village of **São Lourenço.** Surrounding the bay is a semicircle of steep green hills which appear to reflect the rippling blue ocean; it's no illusion though, merely the result of labour intensive efforts to build row upon row of narrow terraces and vineyards all the way up the hillsides. At **Maia** on the south-eastern coast there are yet more astonishing views over steep flowery slopes down to the sea, especially from above the lighthouse, Farol de Gonçalo Velho; even here the rocky hillside has been neatly terraced for cultivation.

From Maia, the road back to Porto passes through the rural splendours of **Santo Espírito** with a 16th century chapel to St Anthony in the typical simple style of Santa Maria's many small chapels. Another tiny chapel worth looking out for is the Ermida de Nossa Senhora de Fátima at **São Pedro**; built in the 1920s it nevertheless matches the older buildings in architectural style, but to reach it you have to climb 150 steps, as it's located right at the top of a steep hill – as if to oblige pilgrims to prove their physical if not their moral fortitude.

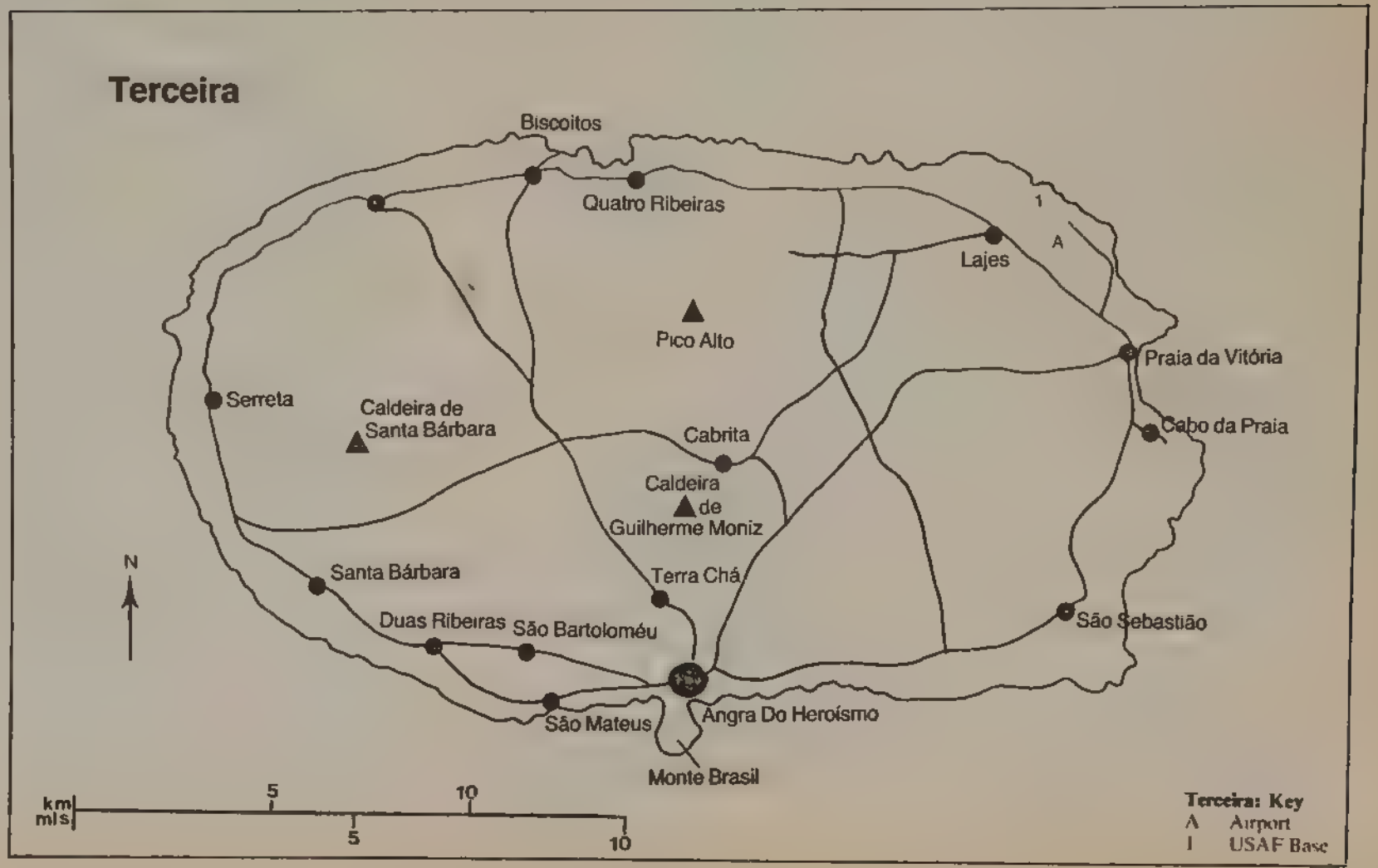
On the south coast, a final excursion follows a twisty road down to **Praia**, named for its beach, a glorious stretch of fine golden sand with the best swimming in Santa Maria.

8 Terceira

Angra do Heroismo, p280 Around the Island, 282

Terceira: the island's name means 'third'. It was the third island in the Azores to be discovered and colonized by the Portuguese and it is third in size (145 square miles) after São Miguel and Pico. But for centuries Terceira was the most important and most developed island in the archipelago, only outpaced today by São Miguel, roughly 85 miles away to the south-east. It's very different from São Miguel in landscape and atmosphere, yet just as Azorean in essence, with particularly fine Portuguese colonial palaces and mansions and more historic monuments than the rest of the island put together.

Tragically, many of those stately 'sights' have been turned into heaps of rubble, or at best rendered unsafe to visit, by the earthquake of 1980, which also hit the neighbouring islands of Graciosa and São Jorge. Over three quarters of Terceira's capital city, Angra do Heroismo, was damaged by the quake, but the event warranted only a line or two in the world's Press because very few people were killed – merely shocked out of their wits and made suddenly homeless. It happened on the afternoon of New Year's Day, when most Terceirans were out in the streets celebrating the holiday, otherwise many more casualties would have been trapped in the tumbling houses. That day is etched into the minds of everyone in Agra, and everyone has his own story of what he was doing at the time. Taxi drivers remember the road rippling slowly beneath them, and put it down to over-indulgence on New Year's Eve; billiard-players remember the ball bouncing off the table, apparently of its own volition; others remember goldfish leaping out of the bowls.


Terceira
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Quatro Ribeiras
1
A
Lajes
Pico Alto
Praia da Vitória
Serreta
Caldeira de
Santa Bárbara
Cabrita
Cabo da Praia
Caldeira
de
Guilherme Moniz
N
Santa Bárbara
Terra Chá
Duas Ribeiras
São Bartoloméu
São Sebastião
São Mateus
Angra Do Heroísmo
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Terceira: Key
A Airport
1 USAF Base

swaying chimneys, cracks in the walls etc. And still, eighteen months after the disaster, most of Angra remains in dusty heaps or else stands only with the support of scaffolding.

So who wants to go and play the ghoul? Well, the island is slowly, painfully, hauling itself back to normality; although priority in reconstruction work naturally falls to homes for the hundreds who still live in portacabins or jammed into the remaining accommodation, Terceira is already planning to restore Angra's glorious architectural heritage, and the Tourist Office in Angra is a busy, friendly, efficient place despite being housed in a temporary shelter. Moreover, it was the south of the island that took the full brunt of the shock; much of the rest went unscathed; the American air base at Lajes, for example, apparently suffered no major structural damage at all.

The American presence is very strongly felt in Terceira, from the moment you arrive at the airport, in fact, among all those military aircraft. There are lots of notices and advertisements in English, clocks in the departure lounge show Boston and Montreal time as well as Azores time (one hour behind Greenwich Mean Time in winter, GMT in summer), and everywhere there are American automobiles and personnel. It was they who built the airport in the first place, in 1943, as a transit point for airborne troops flying to join the war in Europe; now it's even more important as a strategic location for NATO's defence of the western hemisphere.

Angra do Heroísmo

Roughly one third of the island's 65,000 inhabitants live in or near Angra, despite the devastation. Even very recent books and brochures show it to have been the most splendid city of the Azores, chock a-block with fine churches, mansions and monuments, most of them dating from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, recalling the island's former illustrious role as heart and capital of the whole archipelago. The sheltered harbour was the primary cause of Angra's early greatness, protected by the great green peninsula of Monte Brasil jutting south into the empty Atlantic. By 1634 Angra had been deemed worthy of the islands' first bishopric, and merchants who derived their wealth from trade between Europe and the New World similarly made Angra their base, building themselves homes to reflect their prosperity and contributing lavishly to the construction of churches and convents – partly, no doubt, to bolster their

own self-esteem. Indeed, Angra remained capital of the Azores until 1832 when administrative changes separated the archipelago into three districts; now it is merely the capital of the district comprising Terceira, Graciosa and São Jorge. And that proud epithet, 'do Heroismo', bestowed on the city by Queen Maria II following the inhabitants' heroic resistance to attack by Absolutist forces in 1829, was never more deserved than now, as Angra struggles to recover from 1980's first cruel offering.

Built in a compact semi circle round the natural harbour, the only city in the archipelago to have been planned in lay-out, Angra slopes gently uphill away from the sea, dominated on the one hand by the **Memória**, the monument to Angra's *heroísmo* – once an elegant tall stone pyramid forming a prominent local landmark, now just a heap of rubble – and on the other hand by **Monte Brasil**. To reach the high hilly peninsula of Monte Brasil, you have to pass through the solid defensive flanks of the **Castelo de São João Bapitista**, a 16th century fortress which even defied the earthquake, where soldiers parade before the respectful eyes of grazing sheep. From there a network of paths and metalled roads lead round the steep slopes through wild flowers, heather, gorse and trees to several magnificent viewpoints, north and east over the city, west towards São Mateus and south to the open sea. It is, unsurprisingly, a favourite picnic and recreation spot, especially to the south where the extinct crater opens into a deep crescent shape that catches the sun and excludes the wind. At the summit, **Pico dos Cruzeiros** (650 ft), there stands a tall cross marked '1432' to commemorate the discovery of the Azores. Tucked into the cliffs on the isthmus between Monte Brasil and the city is the **Prainha**, or 'Little Beach', with a sea water swimming pool.

Across the shallow harbour from the Castelo de São João Baptista there's another equally solid old fortress still standing despite the seismic shock: the 17th century **Castelo de São Sebastião** (not open to the public) protecting the eastern flanks of the small port.

In Angra itself, when the restoration work is complete, the scaffolding gone and building workers have removed their concrete mixers and sandhills, it will once again be possible to admire the **Sé**, the 16th-century cathedral in the heart of town; the Jesuit **Colégio** church, its façade a masterpiece of baroque architecture, containing a rich treasury of religious works; the **Igreja da Misericórdia** facing the bay beside the 16th century **Alfândega** (customs house) at the bottom of Rua de Lisboa; the **Palácio Bettencourt**, a 17th century palace now housing the town municipal library, government archives and the **Regional Museum**... But all these fine monuments and buildings are currently

'Em Obras', undergoing slow reconstruction work which will certainly last for another few years. In the meantime, enquire at Angra's excellent Tourist Office (temporarily housed in the portacabin in Largo Prior Crato, just below the Colégio) to find out what is safe to visit.

Despite everything, it's still very possible to enjoy oneself in Angra, drinking and dining in some of the archipelago's best establishments, strolling through the magnificent gardens of **Parque Conde de Terceira** (behind the Hotel de Angra) and watching the heartening progress of determined islanders rebuilding their city.

Around the Island

West of Angra the destruction was almost worse than in the city centre, some of the villages being virtually wiped out. New housing complexes may eventually turn into settled communities around **terra Chá, Bartoloméu, Duas Ribeiras** and **Santa Bárbara**, but at the moment their stark newness is almost as shocking as the ruins. About two miles west of the city is the small fishing village of **São Mateus** looking back towards Monte Brasil (with an excellent restaurant: see chapter on Wining, Dining etc), and from here it is roughly another ten miles round the coast to **Serreta**. The scenery round here is particularly attractive, densely wooded hills descending steeply into the sea with views in clear weather as far west as Graciosa, São Jorge and Pico. But Serreta's main claim to fame is that Presidents Nixon and Pompidou met here in 1971 for a quiet tête-à-tête in the beautiful little hotel, Estalagem da Serreta.

Still following the coast, the road passes through several typically picturesque villages such as **Altares** in the north-west – famous for its *touradas à corda* in summer when bulls with a rope round their neck pursue the locals through the streets – to **Biscoitos** in the north. At Biscoitos, jagged black lava rocks surround a spectacular natural sea-water swimming pool, well worth a visit even if you've left your swimsuit behind. Amid acres of vineyards, Biscoitos is also noted for its wine, though it has no special qualities to recommend it.

Sweeping on along the north coast through yet more attractive villages like **Quatro Ribeiras**, past dozens of gaily painted little chapels (*impérios*) which come to life during the processions of *Festa do Espírito Santo* (May, June: see section on Festivals above), the main road eventually turns inland past the busy **Aerogare** and **US Air Force base** of **Lajes**, the base itself tucked tidily away on a ridge between runways

and coast. Many of the houses around Lajes are occupied by USAF personnel and their families, as proclaimed by the Fords and old Chevrolets parked outside. Just south of the base is **Praia da Vitória**, with the best golden sandy beach in the archipelago. As luck would have it, although Praia was barely affected by the seismic shocks of 1980, the one building to suffer was the town's 16th-century *Igreja Matriz*, its exhilarating, intricately decorated and gilded interior temporarily closed to visitors while awaiting structural repairs. Praia itself has the air of a small holiday resort, and indeed may be judged the only real 'tourist' town in the archipelago, complete with several good souvenir shops – a rarity elsewhere in the Azores – and with the holiday complex of Motel das Nove Ilhas at nearby **Cabo da Praia.**

Pursuing the main road round the final quadrant of the island, through gradually increasing signs of damage as Angra is approached, the next place of interest is **São Sebastião.** This small town has a very attractive 16th century church with a squat two-storey belltower to one side, topped with a little steeple like a dunce's cap; the exterior is typical of Azorean churches in that the walls are whitewashed to contrast with the cornerstones and window-surrounds of natural tufa (lava stone). São Sebastião is also notable for its *touradas à corda*, the bull on-a-rope fights which draw thousands of spectators to cram the streets and watch daring young men displaying their courage and fleetness of foot.

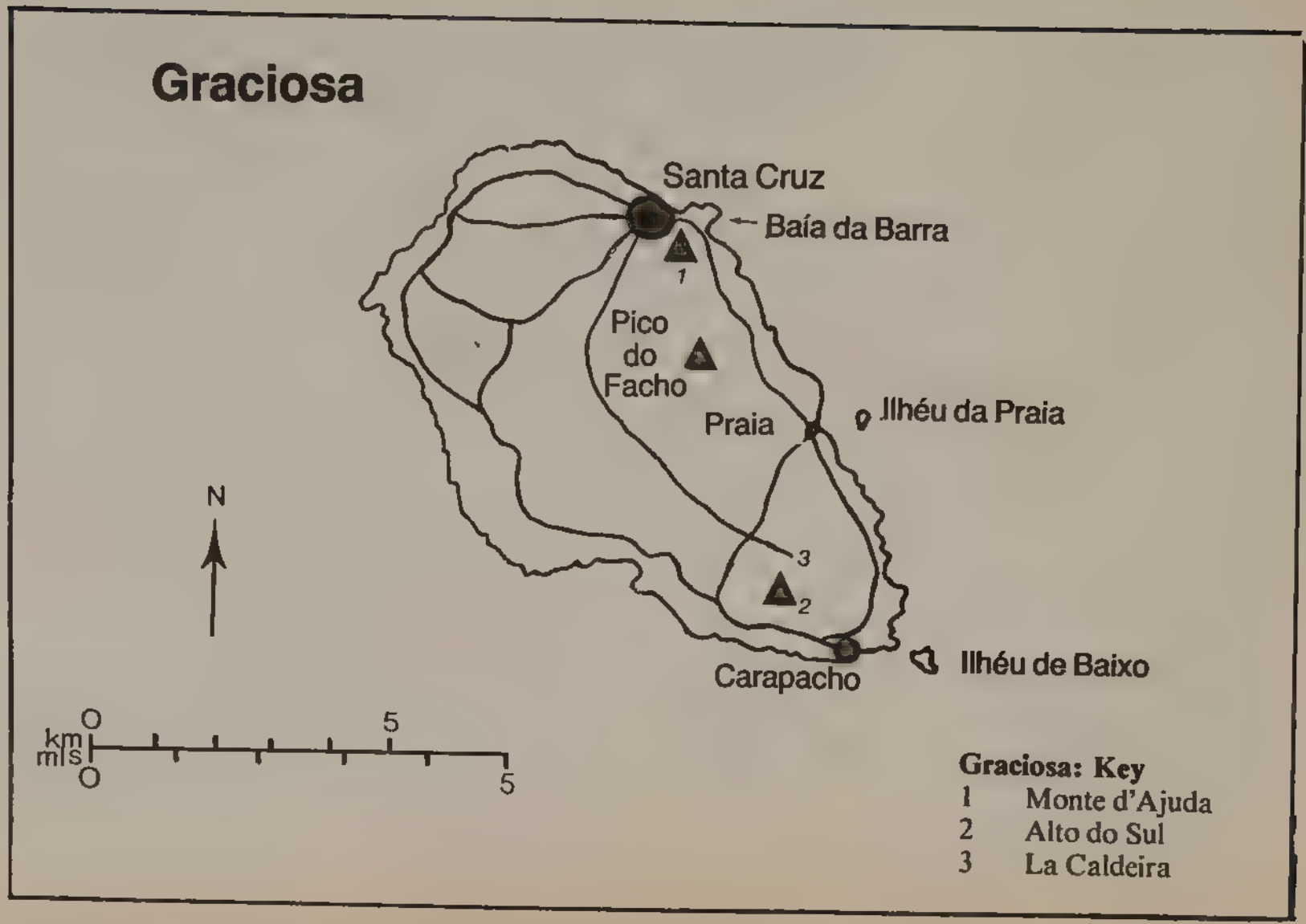
But so far we've seen nothing of the interior, the true character of Terceira's countryside. Some of the most enjoyable excursions in the island follow the gently undulating hills and valleys, past fields of highly bred black bulls and placid cows wearing bells, forests and flowers – everywhere flowers: in April azaleas, in June hydrangeas. Terceira's several small *lagoas* are not worthy of comparison with São Miguel's magnificent lakes, but in summer they provide many a quiet beauty spot for picnickers and daytrippers. There are splendid views from the summit of both **Pico Alto** (2,650 ft) in the north and the rim of the **Santa Bárbara** crater (3,350 ft) to the west. Finally, right in the centre of the island is the impressive great crater or 'cauldron', **Caldeira de Guilherme Moniz**, over 8 miles in circumference. And keen speleologists will enjoy a visit to the subterranean hot water lakes at **Cabrita** nearby; a guide can be arranged through the Tourist Office in Angra.

9 Graciosa

Thirty-five miles north-west of Terceira lies the most northerly island in this central group: Graciosa, belonging like São Jorge to the district of Angra do Heroismo. Very little happens here to disturb the rule of peace, just the infrequent visits of inter-island ferries. It's the second smallest island in the archipelago, only 23 square miles in area, and has a present population of roughly 6,000, almost all of them engaged in farming or fishing. Said to be the most fertile island in the Azores – and that *is* saying something – Graciosa produces mainly cereals, fruit and vegetables.

Ilha Graciosa means 'Charming Island', very apt in itself, but the Portuguese word *graciosa* now has an archaic ring that's even more appropriate. History seems to have passed the island by, with just a casual nod from century to century, and there's a quality of timelessness among Graciosa's little farming communities and fishing ports. Until an airport opens (conceivably within the next year or two), few tourists have the leisure to make the necessary ferry journey from Terceira. In any case, the only accommodation for visitors consists of two or three private guest houses (*casas de hóspedes*) and there is little in the way of outstanding natural phenomena to lure people here. Yet the gentle rustic beauty and tranquility leave a lingering nostalgia in whoever is fortunate to find his way to Graciosa.

The main town is **Santa Cruz**, founded in the 15th century by one Pedro Correia da Cunha who became the island's first governor. Chateaubriand, the French diplomat and author, stayed here in 1791 en route for America, later praising Graciosa's bucolic charms in his *Memoires d'Outre-Tombe*. Santa Cruz today has several attractive old houses, mostly dating from the 18th century, many with the delicately wrought lattice work balconies that are characteristic of Azorean domestic architecture of this period. The 16th-century *Igreja Matriz*


Graciosa
Santa Cruz
Baía da Barra
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Graciosa: Key
1 Monte d'Ajuda
2 Alto do Sul
3 La Caldeira

dedicated to São Francisco, is Graciosa's most notable construction along with the nearby *Ingreja da Misericódia*, and there are three simple chapels just above town on the little hill called **Monte d'Ajuda**, including the 17th-century *Capela de Nossa Senhora d'Ajuda*. At the summit of this hillock (420 ft) you can look down on Santa Cruz and wonder at the neatness of its layout, like a child's painting of Toy Town with its orderly streets of white-washed houses, red-tiled roofs and tall trees surrounding a village pond. Just south of town is the **Baia da Barra**, where fields have been divided and sub-divided by walls and hedges to protect crops from the wind in a colourful geometric pattern like a modern work of art.

Graciosa's other main port is **Praia**, south from Santa Cruz, surrounded by a regular patchwork of rectangular yellow and green fields, principally growing cereals. About half a mile off shore lies a little grassy islet, **Ilhéu da Praia**, fringed by rocks and white-laced waves. But despite its name, Praia does not have a good beach, just rather coarse black volcanic sand.

A drive around the island or through the mountains – the highest points are **Alto do Sul** (1,300 ft) on the rim of the southern crater and **Pico do Facho** (1,200 ft) – passes through numerous tidy little hamlets saved from monotony by their cheerfully painted houses often dominated by a windmill's tall sails.

Graciosa's one contribution to the archipelago's collection of natural wonders is the **Furna do Enxofre**, 'Sulphurous Spring', beneath the crater floor of **La Caldeira.** Visitors with a mind to can descend 250 ft down a spiral staircase cut into the lava rock to a warm dark grotto and the sulphurous subterranean lake. Prince Albert of Monaco, who made repeated visits to Graciosa just to see this extraordinary place, supposedly proclaimed it the most beautiful sight a Speleogist could ever hope to see. It's certainly spectacular, with yellow patches caused by the condensing sulphur fumes and mosses and lichens on the walls, stalagtites reflecting in the water's surface.

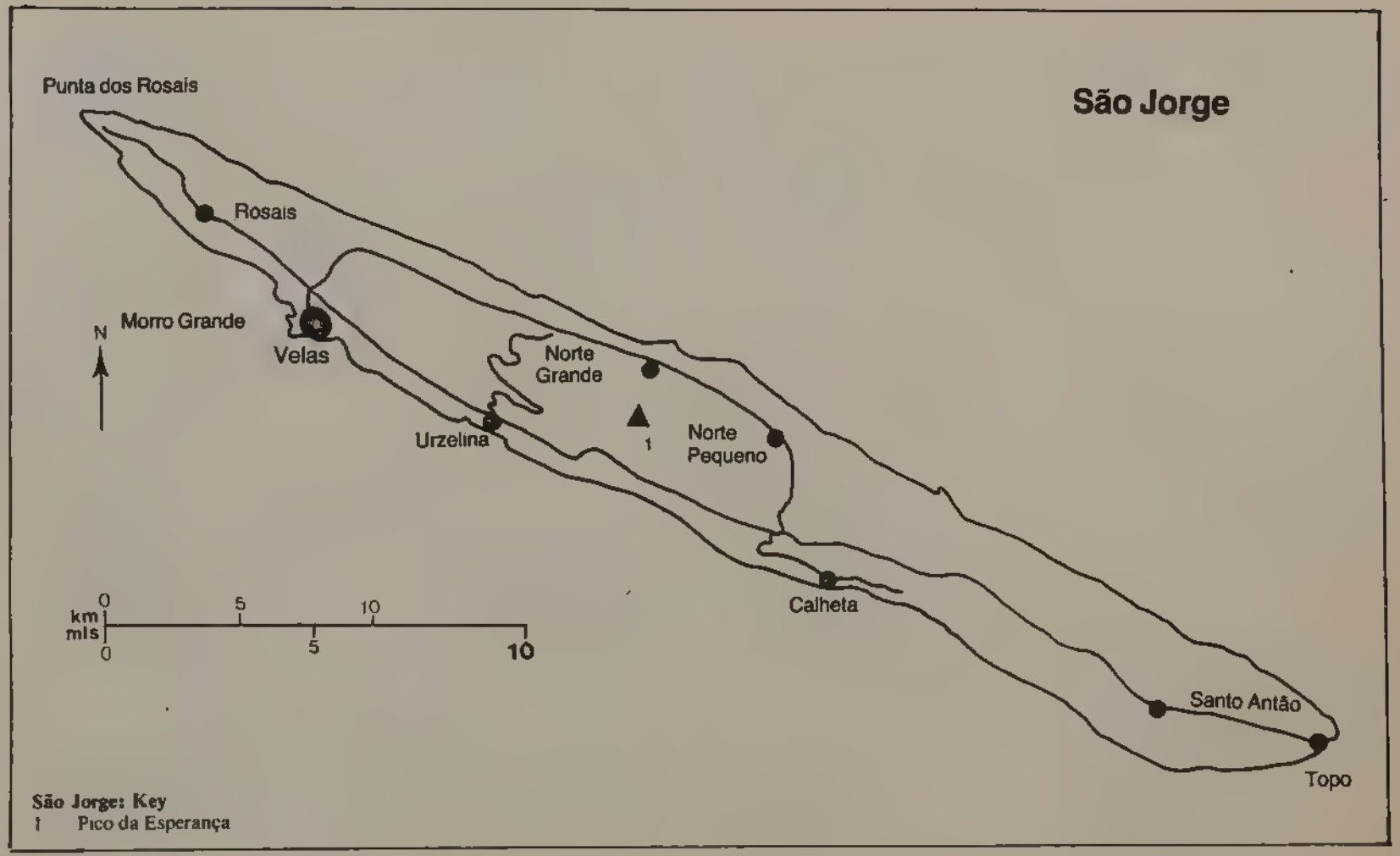
Right at the southern tip of the island there is an attractive village with a difference: **Carapacho**, famous for its alkaline thermal baths. The *balneário* or bathhouse allows sufferers of rheumatism and similar complaints to ease their aching joints in the warm waters, whose source lies in the hills surrounding La Caldeira. There's marvellous fishing to be had round Carapacho, for those who can find someone to hire out a boat, especially round the rocky islet of **Ilhéu de Baixo** just off the southernmost point.

10 São Jorge

This is the long thin cigar-shaped island that completes the district of Angra do Heroísmo, though closer in fact to the island of Pico (11 miles away) than to Terceira (23 miles). A range of high volcanic peaks forms the backbone of São Jorge, the highest point being Pico da Esperança (3,450 ft), and the coasts are mainly precipitous, some of the cliffs rising over 1,500 ft from the sea. Every town and village has a splendid green backcloth against which to display the quaint charm of its churches and cottages, with dense vegetation covering all but the tallest peaks.

Utterly different frm Graciosa's gentle landscape, São Jorge is very nearly as fertile. It's an island of hill pastures and cattle grazing on rich green meadows, dairy produce being the mainstay of the local economy. Indeed, agriculture is virtually the only source of income for the 11,000 islanders, which is the principal cause of continuing emigration: São Jorge presently comes second in the depopulation stakes, behind only Santa Maria. But like Graciosa, São Jorge has plans to open an airport within the next few years, despite obvious problems of location in such mountainous terrain. Then perhaps more visitors will come and admire the island's beauties, maybe even a fledgling tourist industry will develop, providing employment for the islanders and hotels and other necessary facilities for the traveller.

The main town is **Velas**, a picturesque huddle of houses beneath steep green hills on the south coast. Partly because São Jorge was always annexed to Terceira, never having a governor of its own, few merchants or nobles wanted to settle here, and there is a consequent dearth of grand mansions and other historic monuments. The simple *Igreja Matriz*, dating from the 17th century – with a very elegant black and


São Jorge
Punta dos Rosais
Rosais
Morro Grande
Velas
Norte Grande
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Norte Pequeno
Calheta
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km
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5
10
São Jorge: Key
1 Pico da Esperança

white belltower topped by an oriental-looking white dome – and the Igreja de São Francisco are among the few notable constructions in the town, with the possible addition of the 18th century town hall.

Climbing out of Velas to join the main road that runs from end to end of the island, the visitor soon gets an idea of what to expect from the roads; they twist and turn in and out of river valleys, following the mountain contours. At the summit of **Morro Grande** ('Big Hill', 500 ft) on the promontory sheltering Velas, there are marvellous views in all directions of steep cliffs and hills, the low-lying shelf on which Velas itself lies, and south west to the majestic cone of Pico, which seems to be visible from every part of São Jorge. North-west of here the main road passes through a ribbon-like spread of houses that together make up the village of **Rosais**, and finally comes out of the westernmost tip of the island, **Punta dos Rosais**, with a lighthouse and marvellous views of Pico, Faial and Graciosa.

Along the north coast, even more precipitous than the south, the only two villages of any size are **Norte Grande** and **Norte Pequeno** but they are mere distractions amid the magnificent scenery: mountains plunging sheer into the sea, with breakers crashing soundlessly at their feet. The south coast, by comparison, has several tiny coves (no beaches as such) where islanders have managed to build their homes and terraces up the steep hillsides.

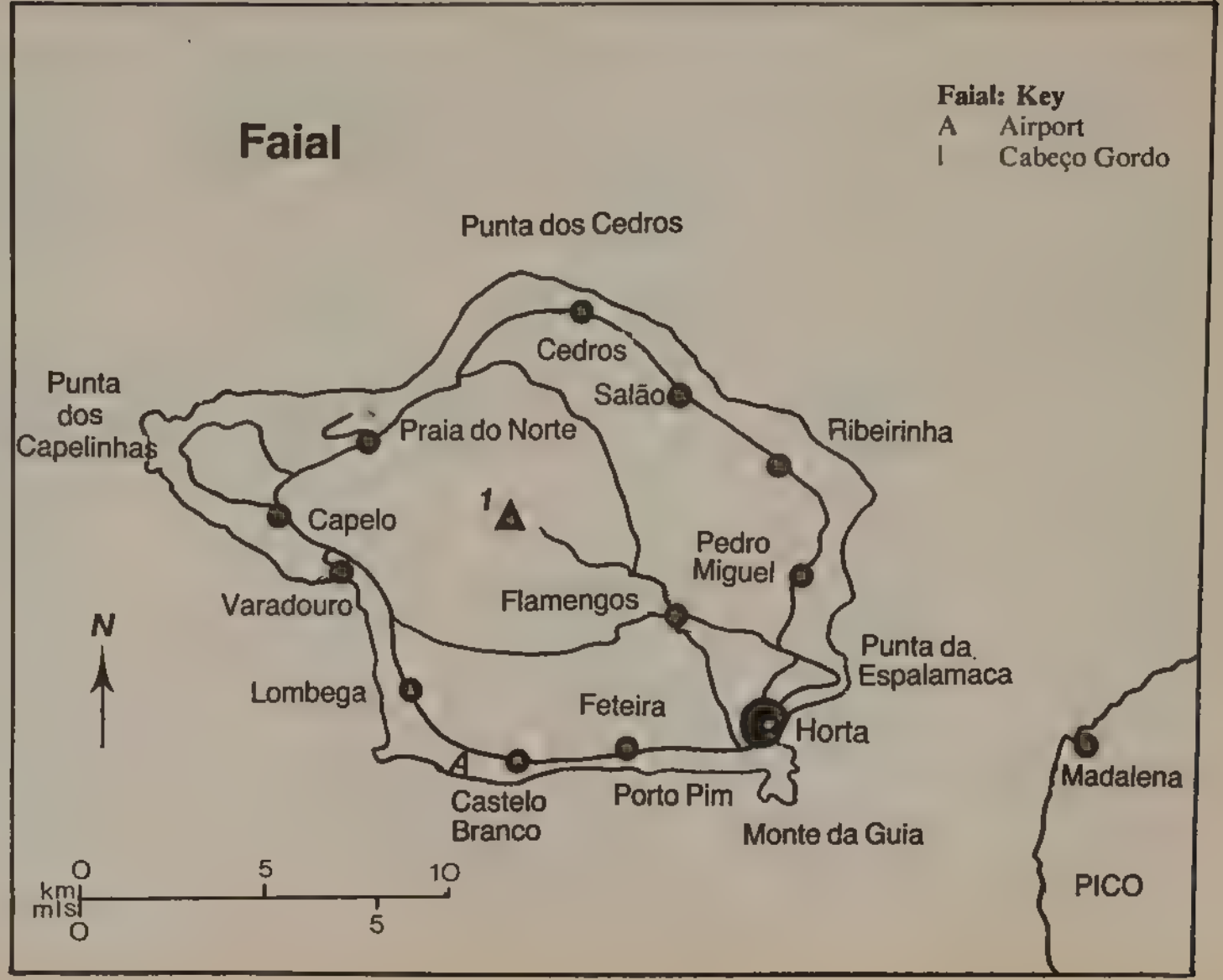
Starting at the south-eastern tip of the island at the little port of **Topo** (literally 'Summit' or 'Top End', which seems somehow wrong for the lowest, i.e. most southerly, village in the island) the road snakes up towards Calheta through high pastures and flowery meadows to **Santo Antão**, crossing cascading rivers and waterfalls and climbing almost to the top of the southern ridge, **Serra do Topo. Calheta** itself lies on the coast below the main road, second largest town after Velas, with one or two handsome old houses and a small port where fishermen land their catches for delivery to the canning factory nearby. Between Calheta and Velas, one other village worthy of mention is **Urzelina**, destroyed by a volcanic eruption in 1802, and so dating mostly from the last century; you can still see the original church tower rising from the petrified lava which buried the rest of the community.

11 Faial

Horta, p292 Around the Island, p292

Although a mere 65 square miles in area, Faial is one of the three most developed islands. The capital, Horta, is also the district town of the four most westerly islands: Faial itself and neighbouring Pico, plus Flores and Corvo. Sometimes called *A Ilha Azul*, 'the Blue Island', for the blue sky, blue sea and masses of blue-flowering hydrangeas – best seen in summer – Faial has some marvellous scenery ranging from pastoral green hill slopes to the volcanic wasteland around Capelinhos – not forgetting the magnificent views of Pico.

Many of Faial's early colonists were Flemish, following in the wake of a Flemish nobleman who became the island's first governor. His name was Josse Van Huerter, and the city of Horta was originally the city of Huerter. Also recalling the presence of these foreign colonists is the small town of Flamengos, or 'Flemings', in the hills above Horta. Thanks to its excellent natural harbour, Porto Pim, protected like Angra do Heroísmo by a green hilly promontory, Faial was visited by all the early transatlantic voyagers and Horta rapidly developed into the second most important town in the Azores, after Angra. Throughout the 16th century, pirates made a beeline for Horta, and several Britons also launched punitive raids on the island, including the Earl of Essex and his young friend Walter Raleigh in 1597. And now, thanks to the new airport (opened 1971) and the relatively good selection of hotels, Faial is gradually becoming one of the favourite islands on the tourist itinerary.


Faial
Faial: Key
A Airport
l Cabeço Gordo
Punta dos Cedros
Cedros
Salão
Punta dos Capelinhas
Praia do Norte
Ribeirinha
Capelo
1
Pedro Miguel
Varadouro
Flamengos
N
Punta da Espalamaca
Lombega
Feteira
Horta
Madalena
Castelo Branco
Porto Pim
Monte da Guia
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Horta

Encircling the wide bay between **Monte da Guia** in the south and the rocky headland of **Punta da Espalamaca** in the north, Horta is essentially a port. Until the breakwater was built in the 1880s, Horta's port was to the south of Monte da Guia at Porto Pim (see below), but now ships sail round the half-submerged volcanic crater to enter Horta itself. And the first seaplane to visit the Azores landed in Horta's port in 1919.

Dominating the town port is the squat creeper-clad fortress formerly called the **Castelo de Santa Cruz**, dating from 1565. In 1947 it was declared a *monumento nacional* and now it has become an excellent hotel, the Estalagem de Santa Cruz. To one side of the fortress-hotel is a quay where small boats leave for Pico, to the other side is a small garden, **Jardim do Infante Dom Henrique**, with a bust of Prince Henry himself.

Among Horta's several fine churches, one of the most notable is the **Igreja Matriz de São Salvador**, formerly a Jesuit convent church. The original church dating from the early 16th century was burnt down by those dastardly English marauders in 1597 and the present building dates from around 1610, with a rather forbidding façade. Another interesting church stands on the isthmus between Horta and Porto Pim, **Igreja de Nossa Senhora das Anguistias**, of 17th-century construction but replacing an earlier chapel built in the 15th century for the wife of Josse Van Huerter. Yet another church, **Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Roasário** - also known as **Igreja de São Francisco**, after the Franciscan monks who built it – now houses Horta's **Museum of Sacred Art**.

With several lively cafés, bars and restaurants, lots of helpful agencies for boat or car hire, plus a friendly, helpful Tourist Office, Horta is certain to become increasingly popular among tourists looking for a holiday with a difference.

Around the Island

Horta's original port, **Porto Pim**, is separated from the modern port only by a narrow neck of land leading to Monte da Guia, really a part of the capital itself. On the south side of the isthmus stand *As Muralhas de Porto Pim* ('The Walls of. . .') which once formed part of Horta's defensive fortifications. . . There's a greyish beach below the crags of Monte

da Guia and further round still an old whaling factory.

Following the coastal road towards the airport, you pass first through the village of **Feteira**, with fine solid old houses, their gardens spilling blossom over the walls – hibiscus, roses, mimosa, geraniums. The 19th-century church, replacing a 16th-century chapel on the same site, has an attractive blue and white tiled steeple over the belltower, which had to be restored after an earthquake in 1926. Off the coast near Feteira are some bizarre black rock formations, grottoes and arches – best seen from a boat – which resulted from molten lava bubbling and steaming into the sea. Passing the **airport** road on the left, the next village is **Castelo Branco**, with several small houses painted in the Azoreans' typical gay colours: shocking pink, soft blue, eau-de-nil, bright yellow. Yellow and white seems to be the favourite combination in nearby **Lombega**, where there is also a pretty roadside chapel decorated with turquoise tiles. Rounding the steep coastline with a delightful profusion of wild flowers, a left turn at **Arieiro** leads down to the popular holiday spot of **Varadouro** (though there are no facilities for the casual visitor). Lots of holiday villas cling to the hillside as you descend towards the sea and there's a 'natural' sea water swimming pool (aided by man) among the black rocks. Varadouro's fame rests upon the discovery in 1853 of a thermal spring, which prompted the building of a *balneário*, original bathhouse now replaced by a very institutional-looking building.

Rejoining the main road, a short distance on you pass through the village of **Capelo**; notice the little white hut to the left of the road – it's a watchtower for the whale-spotters in summer. In Capelo, a minor road branches off to the left, and as you follow it you're in no doubt as to where it leads; all around is á volcanic desert, cinders and ash in which nothing yet grows – all due to a major eruption in 1957. The old volcano of Capelo had shown frequent activity throughout the centuries, but in 1957 a submarine eruption caused a new volcano to rise out of the sea just off this westernmost tip of Faial, near the rocky islets of Capelinhos. On and off for months, the explosions made a dramatic fireworks display, hurling fiery molten matter into the sky. A westerly wind blew burning cinders across the island, causing hurried evacuation and eventually burying whole villages, farms and fields in a thick layer of ash. Gradually, as the molten lava solidified and spread, the Capelinhos islets became joined to the mainland and the new volcano took their name, **Volcão dos Capelinhos**. It's possible to drive down over the cindery track and stand beside a half-buried lighthouse which formerly marked the edge of the coast – but no longer; there's several hundred yards of volcanic sand dunes now between the abandoned lighthouse and the sea.

A small house on the road above, back towards Horta, contains the so-called **Museu do Volcão**, a collection of tatty but fascinating photographs with English captions explaining the volcano's progress, and a few lava 'bombs' and other samples of ejected matter. If the museum is closed when you arrive, give a toot or two on the car horn and someone will appear from the nearby houses to let you in (admission free, but leave a tip).

Continuing the tour of the island, a main road north from Capela enters the scene of worst devastation: homes and fields all but hidden under deep layers of ash. But gradually new houses are being built and people are starting to plant crops again, particularly the sweet potato which apparently flourishes in such conditions.

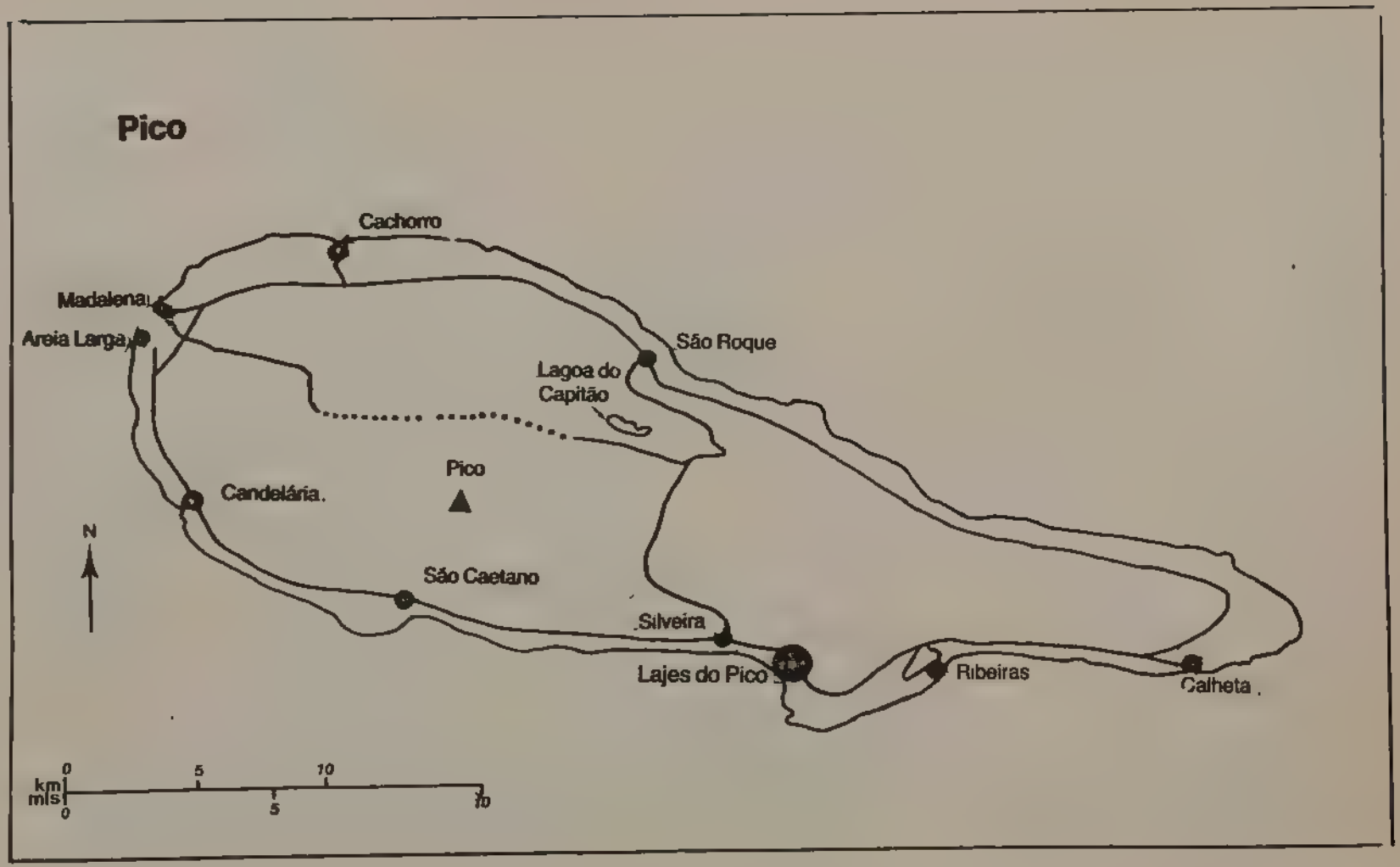
Around the villages of **Praia do Norte**, the volcano's effects are forgotten, for here the countryside is green and lush with lots of suitable sites for picnics and splendid views down over the coat. The northernmost point of Faial, **Punta dos Cedros,** is just west of **Cedros** itself, where the first settlers arrived at Faial. The original church, now replaced by an extraordinary ultra modern chapel, dated from the 16th century but was almost entirely destroyed by a fire in 1971, only the old belltower remaining. **Salão**, a mile or two beyond Cedros, is a small village amid some of Faial's most delightful countryside, surrounded by wild flowers and especially the blooming hydrangeas which were introduced to the Azores in the 18th century and are now thoroughly naturalized. Through **Ribeirinha** and **Pedro Miguel**, typical 'ribbon' development, each with a handsome 17th-century church, the road finally returns to Horta via the headland of **Espalamaca,** topped by a windmill or two and a prominent monument overlooking the town. The monument is dedicated to Our Lady of the Coneception and bears a marble statue of the Virgin standing below a 90 ft cross (raised 1962).

From Horta, one final excursion is to the deep volcanic crater in the centre of the island, **La Caldeira**. Almost perfectly circular with a diameter of over 2,000 yards, the crater contains a small lake nearly 1,300 ft below the rim, reflecting blue sky and dark shadows cast by the crater walls. On the southern edge of the crater are Faial's highest peaks, including **Cabeço Gordo**, more than 3,400 ft above sea level.

12 Pico

Just a half-hour's boatride away from Horta across the Canal do Faial is the island of Pico, second largest of the Azores at 170 square miles. It's the island whose name no one can forget, especially after seeing the tall peak for which it is called. Perhaps the best views of the mountain are to be had from Horta, from where its perfectly formed volcanic cone seems to support the sky. Slightly blue hazy in the distance, often trailing wisps of cloud around the summit and snow-covered in winter, Pico looks like a delicate Japanese painting. But the island is more than a single peak, however beautiful it may be, and the traveller can find plenty to marvel at besides the mountain. There are two or three simple but very good *residenciales* here, so it isn't néccessary to rush in order to catch the last boat back to Horta; anyway the crossing can sometimes become impossible when winter winds whip up the sea — the ferry is just a small open motor launch.

Although the visitor from Faial usually lands at **Madalena**, a small port facing Horta across the channel, this is not Pico's principal town. That honour goes to Lajes do Pico on the south coast. But we'll abandon the usual procedure in this instance and start not with the island's main town but with Madalena itself. After climbing unsteadily out of the small boat, the new arrival quickly has to adjust to the idea that this island is going to be the odd one out among the Azores: the harsh black rocks that surround Madalena's miniscule port are a taste of things to come. But before hiring a car or a taxi to rush off around the island, pause for a moment to admire the *Igreja Matriz* dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, hence the town's name. Its dominant twin towered façade, so typical of Portuguese religious architecture of the period (18th


Pico
Cachorro
Madalena
Areia Larga
São Roque
Lagoa do Capitão
Pico
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century), disguises a sumptuous interior, with a particularly gorgeous high altar, gilded and ornate. But apart from a fish market beside the gaily painted fishing boats in the harbour, a small post office almost sinking below a forest of telecommunications aerials, and a few branch offices of banks and travel agencies, that's about the sum total of Madalena.

South of Madalena the road is lined with small fields, each surrounded by waist-high black stone walls, laboriously created and maintained by the islanders to protect their precious vines, tomatoes and other crops. The soil may be fertile, but the cultivation is penal. Less than a mile from Malalena a right turn leads down to the village of **Areia Larga**, with a swimming pool among the rocks and a good view of the two islets that lie off Madalena: **Ilhéu Deitado** and **Ilhéu Em Pé** (Sleeping Isle and Standing Isle).

The main road follows the coast south east through **Candelária**, with a handsome early 19th century church, whose two towers are topped by curious little domes, containing a beautiful gilded wood retable. By now you're growing accustomed to the nature of Pico's landscape, which seems to consist of black walls hiding the vegetation. Suddenly, however the scenery begins to change. The lower mountain slopes around **São Caetano** are densely wooded, and up among the forests there are some beautiful shady trails for picnickers and ramblers to pursue. Several small villages lie amid this lush green landscape where wild hibiscus, lilies, nasturtiums and periwinkles vie with small plots of potatoes, figs, even bananas.

At **Silveira**, where the houses tend not to be whitewashed – unusual in the Azores – a road to the left climbs across the central ridge which tails south east from Pico. In clear weather this road, the Estrada Transversal, is a splendid route with some of the best views in the island, especially descending to the north coast around São Roque (see below). Meanwhile, still continuing south east, you finally reach Pico's main town, **Lajes do Pico**, or Lajes for short. Dominated by a tall brick chimney (part of the whaling factory) Lajes is not really much larger than Madalena although it has some of Pico's most imposing buildings. The *Igreja Matriz* dates from 1895, and is nowhere near as interesting as the ex-Franciscan convent church, *Igreja Nossa Senjora da Conceição*, which stands beside the main road into town (17th century, with later alterations). There are also two or three very good restaurants and cafés in Lajes, one with 1950s style interior complete with jukebox playing hits from that period.

Beyond Lajes it's worth leaving the main road for some delightful detours down through several coastal villages such as **Ribeiras** with a

small harbour and richly cultivated hillslopes, and **Calheta**, on a narrow shelf of land among banana trees; round the easternmost tip of the island particularly there are dozens of sleepy little hamlets amid flowers and fields of cereals and vines. Pico's *verdelho* wine, said to be the best in the Azores, owes its distinctive flavour to the fertile volcanic soil which feeds the grapes.

The north coast is no less beautiful than the south coast: cliffs and steep hillsides covered in wild flowers, hydrangea bushes and ferns descend to *fajãs*, cultivated ledges of land beside the sea. But the north coast is principally noted for its bizarre natural formations: *mistérios*, as the people here call them, twisted jagged black lava rocks forming arches, caves, even shapes like human or animal figures; some of the most impressive are at **Cachorro**, a few miles from Madalena. **São Roque** is the main town along this coast, with several noteworthy buildings amid beautiful scenery, among them the 18th-century *Igreja de São Pedro de Alcântara*, beside a Franciscan ex-convent.

From São Roque the Estrada Transversal crosses the mountains to Silveira on the south coast, with marvellous views down over the verdant hillsides and across to São Jorge, 11 miles away. At the summit of the ridge there are several rough cinder tracks off the road leading to two or three small lakes nestling high in the hills amid velvety green peaks and spectacular panoramic views, such as the **Lagoa da Capitão**.

Between the transverse route and Madalena there's a road following the northern flanks of Pico mountain, but beware: although the road starts out well at either end, in between it becomes almost impassable. From here it's possible to make brief sorties up the hillsides, but for an attempt on Pico's summit you really must have a guide (ask at the Tourist Office in Horta). The slithery ash trails and deep potholes left by collapsed fumaroles are just a few of the dangers that threaten the unwary.

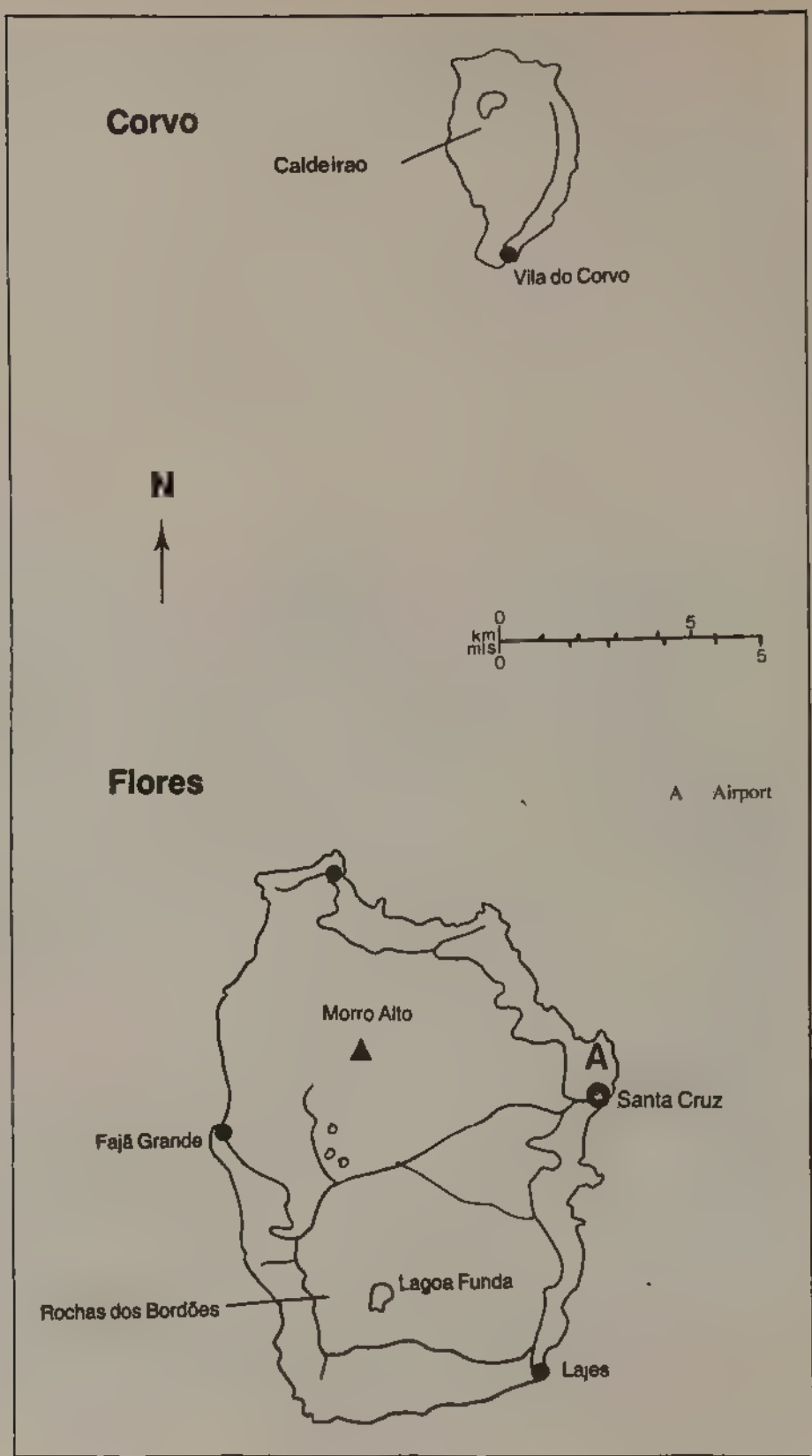
If you're lucky, if the weather is good and you've found a guide, reaching the summit of Pico is an unforgettable, humbling experience. Rising to a majestic height of 7,713 ft – the highest mountain in Portugal, never mind the Azores – the perfectly formed symmetrical crater at the top, its walls some one hundred feet or more above the crater floor, surrounds a mini-cone **Piquinho**, that looks down on everything in the archipelago.

13 Flores and Corvo

These are the two most easterly islands in the Azores, roughly 140 miles north-west of Faial. The little airport at Santa Cruz is a sign of what to expect from these remote outposts of European civilization: there is no terminal at all, merely a tiny tumbledown shack where passengers check in with their baggage – no facilities at all, not even a loo, still less room for everyone to shelter if it's raining. Yet the natural friendliness of the islanders immediately welcomes the traveller, surrounding him with questions like: 'Do you have somewhere to stay?' 'Do you want a taxi?' 'Can I carry your baggage?' 'Would you like to come with us to Corvo?'

Flores is one of the prettiest of islands. The name means 'Flowers', and that is what there are: a profusion of wild flowers spilling out of every hedgerow and craggy nook, but most of all hydrangeas, the most typical plant of the Azores. At 55 square miles in area, neither one of the largest nor one of the smallest islands, in some ways Flores could be considered typical of all the islands. The 5,000 inhabitants work mostly in the fields, growing cereals, fruit, vegetables and vines, or derive their livelihood from the sea.

Santa Cruz is Flores' main town, lying immediately below the airstrip on a rocky ledge beside the sea, its colourful collection of white cottages interspersed with small plots of cultivated land and watched over by a surprisingly large and grandiose church for such a small community: the *Igreja Matriz de Nossa Senhora da Conceição*, dating from the late 18th century but replacing a much earlier church. Between Santa Cruz and the airport 'terminal', is the **French meteorological base**, a large complex of orderly houses and gardens surrounding the Cercle-Messe otherwise known as the 'Hotel de Santa Cruz', since it offers about the only prospect of accommodation in town.


Corvo
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Flores
A Airport
Morro Alto
A
Santa Cruz
Fajã Grande
Lagoa Funda
Rochas dos Bordões
Lajes

North of Santa Cruz one enjoyable excursion follows the magnificient fertile north-east coast round to **Ponta Delgada**, a small fishing port on an isolated spit of land below steep hills. Among these hills are two or three eye-catching white structures, geodesic domes belonging to the French meteorological station. The French arrived in Flores in the mid-sixties, having signed an agreement with the Portuguese to build various installations in the island, and their presence has brought enormous benefits – from the building of the airport itself to much improved road communications.

South of Santa Cruz, another lovely route makes for **Lajes**, sometimes still spelt in the old-fashioned way, Lagens; it's the second most important town in the island but basically just a small port dominated by a tall lighthouse to warn mariners of the dangerous rocky coastline around here. Narrow cobbled streets wind down to the sea past simple white fishermen's cottages and dark stone walls, with only the seabirds' cries to disturb the characteristic tranquility

There are two or three small villages round the west coast, notably **Fajã Grande** with excellent swimming off its small quay, but the attraction of Flores lies more in the fabulous scenery: waterfalls cascading over clifftops, tumbling streams watering the lower pastures, wild flowers and terraced hillsides where vines, figs, apples and a variety of other crops are cultivated. Of all the natural attractions in the island, the most astonishing is **Rochas dos Bordões**, Organpipe Rocks, a craggy bare hillside with vertical 'pipes' rising above the road. The best place to view them is from a *miradouro* to the north, towards Fajã Grande.

In the mountains there are more delights in store: half a dozen small 'lagoons' (*lagoas*), tiny in comparison with those of São Miguel but very nearly as beautiful, amid a peaceful landscape of hills and valleys and the ubiquitous hydrangea bushes. Perhaps the most impressive is **Lagoa Funda** or **Verde** (Deep Green) in the southern hills, but a group of smaller lakes lie to the north of the transverse route below the island's highest peak **Morro Alto** (3,085 ft), surrounded by gentle moorlands that could almost be part of Scotland.

Corvo

A Ilha do Corvo, or 'Crow Island', is the tiniest and most isolated island, only $6\frac{1}{2}$ square miles in area, hard of access because of its steep forbidding coastline and with a total population of 359. Virtually everyone here lives in the one village, **Vila do Crovo**, where they never

lock their doors and crime is unknown. In stormy winter weather, Corvo's only link with the rest of the world is by radio or telephone – and the telephone directory lists only fifteen numbers! Fishing, crop-growing and sheep provide the islanders' main source of income, and it's no wonder that many of them emigrate at least to the larger Azorean islands if not to America or the Continent. Visitors to the island are naturally the object of great curiosity, surrounded by friendly offers of help and guides to show you the 'sights'. For even this little island has its natural wonder: the **Caldeirão**, or 'Great Cauldron', an extinct volcanic crater nearly 1,000 ft deep. Its gently sloping walls, green-carpeted for the grazing sheep, encircle a sparkling, irregular-shaped lake dotted with seven tiny islands.

As glorious as any landscape in the archipelago, the sublime perfection and serenity of Corvo's Caldeirão reflects the essence of the Azores: tranquility, timelessness and exquisite natural beauty.

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Appendix 1
Language and Vocabulary

Spanish p.306 Portuguese p.308 Useful Words and Phrases p.310

(a) Spanish

The Canary Islanders speak Spanish with a Caribbean/South American flavour, and with certain Guanche, Moorish, Portuguese and other influences, but it is no less intelligible than that spoken in other regions of Spain. The most obvious difference is that in the Canaries, as in Andalusia and South America, **c** and **z** are pronounced like **s** rather than in the Castillian manner like **th**, or even swallowed altogether (e.g. *los amigos* is often pronounced *loh amigoh*).

Basically a very straightforward language, pronounced the way it's spelt, Spanish is strongly accented, with the stress normally falling on the penultimate syllable when the word ends with a vowel or **n** or **s**, and on the final syllable when the word ends in any other consonant. Any variation in this is indicated by an acute accent on the syllable to be stressed (e.g. *rápido*).

Vowel Sounds

a open, as in 'father'
e either like ay, as in 'say', or like the first e in 'elephant'
i like the English ee, as in 'seen'

o short, like the o in 'for'
u like oo, as in 'moon' (but not pronounced when it follows q or in the combinations of gue. . . or gui. . .)

Consonants

b like the English b at the beginning of words otherwise more like v
c (+ a, o, u) hard, like k
c (+ e, i) either th (as in 'think' (or s) as in 'sink')
ch always as in 'church'
d like the English d at the beginning of words, as in 'dog' but otherwise more like th as in 'then'
f like English
g (+ a, o, u) hard, as in 'gate'
g (+ e, i) like the Scottish ch, as in 'loch'
h always silent
j like the Scottish ch, as in 'loch'
k not often found; pronounced as in English
l like English
ll like the lli in 'million'
m like English
n like the ni in 'onion'
p like English
q always followed by u; pronounced like k
r trilled in the Scottish manner (especially when doubled)
s like the English s, as in 'skin'
t like English
v much like b at the beginning of words, otherwise like English
w not often found; pronounced like v
x like the English s
y pronounced ee when it stands alone (meaning 'and')
z either th as in 'think' or s as in 'sink'

Grammatical Notes. All Spanish nouns are given masculine or feminine gender: *el/la* or *un/una*. Plurals are formed by adding -s or -es. Adjectives are made to agree with the sound they describe and generally follow it (e.g *una casa bonita*, a pretty house).

In Spanish, unlike French, the verb endings indicate the pronoun subject and the 'I' or 'you' etc is only added for extra emphasis: e.g. *tengo* I – I have, but *yo tengo – I* have it (opposed to him). There are two second-person forms, the intimate (*tu*) and the polite (*usted*); the latter involves the same verb form as the third person; it's rather like the polite

waiter asking, 'Would madam like some tea?' For example, *tienes* – you (singular, intimate) have; *tienan* – you (plural, polite) have.

Rather confusingly the Spanish also have two forms for the verb 'to be': *ser* and *estar*. The first form – *soy, eres, es, somos, sois, son* (I am etc) – indicates a permanent state of affairs; e.g. *soy inglesa* – I am English (feminine). The second form – *estoy, estás, está, estamos, estáis, están* (I am etc) – indicates a temporary state; e.g. *estoy cansado* – I am tired.

In written Spanish, questions are preceded by an inverted question mark as well as followed by one, and exclamations have an inverted exclamation mark before them, but these initial punctuation marks have been omitted in the lists below for simplicity's sake.

(b) Portuguese

The islanders in the Azores and in Madeira speak Portuguese with a distinct accent – rather sing-song, like Welsh – and with Brazilian and other influences, but it's basically familiar to anyone who's visited Continental Portugal.

Compared with Spanish to which it is closely related, spoken Portuguese is extremely difficult, sometimes sounding like Russian, sometimes like French. The stress is usually on the penultimate syllable, except when indicated otherwise by an acute accent. Unstressed syllables tend to get swallowed, particularly at the end of words, and words are often slurred together.

It would be impossible to give an exact description of Portuguese pronunciation in the space of a few lines, but a rough approximation follows. Note particularly that a tilde (˜) above a letter nasalizes it: e.g. *pão* (bread) sound like 'powng'.

Vowels

a long and open, as in 'father' (e.g. *chá*), or short, as in 'lad' (e.g. *taxi*),
or neutral, almost lost, as in 'China' (e.g. *rua*)

e open, as in 'say' (e.g. *cedo*), or short, as in 'bet' (e.g. *é*), or long, as in 'seen' (e.g. *que*), or neutral, almost lost, as in 'open' (e.g. *tarde*)

i short, as in 'sit' (e.g. *minuto*), or long, as in 'seen' (e.g. *dia*)

o open, as in 'top' (e.g *pode*), or, especially when unstressed, as in 'moon' (e.g. *ano*)

u long, as in 'too' (e.g. *museu*)

Note also the following vowel combinations:

ai as in 'style' (e.g. *cais*)
au as in 'now' (e.g. *mau*)
ei as in 'play' (e.g. *correio*)
oi as in 'oyster' (e.g. *dois*)
ou as in 'most' (e.g. *sou*)

Consonants

Mostly as in English, but note the following:

c (+ a, o, u) like the English k (e.g. *casa*)
c (+ e, i) like the English s (e.g. *cigarro*)
ç always pronounced like s (e.g. *maça*)
g (+ a,o,u) hard, as in 'get' (e.g. *água*)
g (+e, i) sounds like the s in 'measure' (e.g. *gelado*)
h always silent
lh like the ly sound in 'million' (e.g. *alho*)
nh like the ny sound in 'canyon' (e.g.*montanha*)
r strongly trilled as in Scottish speech (e.g. *rio*)
s hissed, as in 'salt' (e.g. *sal*), or, especially between vowels, like z as in zoo (e.g. *inglesa*), or at the end of syllables, like sh (e.g. *inglês*)
x either like sh (e.g. *sexta-feira*) or like z (e.g. *exacto*)
z either as in English (e.g. *onze*) or like sh (e.g. *dez*)

Just to get you started, here are a few tips.

e (meaning 'and') is always pronounced **ee**
se faz favor ('please') sounds like **se fash fah-VOOR**
obrigado ('thank you') sounds like **oh-bree-GAH-doo**
adeus ('goodbye') sounds like **ah-DAY-oosh**
sim ('yes') sounds like **seeng**
não ('no') sounds like **nowng**
fala inglês ('do you speak English') sound like **FAH-lereen-GLAYSH**

Grammatical Notes

1. Nouns are either masculine or feminine; most ending in *-o* (except *-ção, -são, -dão*) are masculine, while most ending in *-a* or *-dade* are feminine. Plurals are formed by adding *-s* or *-es*, but nouns ending in *-ão*

become *-ões* (pronounced 'oynsh') and those ending in *-m* become *ns* (pronounced 'nsh').

2. The definite article ('the') and indefinite article ('a') change as shown below:

	Singular	**Plural**
(a) 'the' – masculine	*o* ('oo')	*os* ('oosh')
'the' – feminine	*a* ('uh')	*as* ('ush')
(b) 'a' — masculine	*um* ('oong')	
'a' – feminine	*uma* ('ooma')	

3. As in Spanish, there are two forms of 'you', the intimate *tu* (second person singular) and the polite *voce* or *O senhor* (third person singular). Again as in Spanish, there's no need to worry about the pronoun, just use the third person verb form. For example:

Pode/Podia...?	(Can you/Could you...?)
Tem...?	(Do you have...?)
Vendem...?	(Do you sell...?)

Useful Words and Phrases

English	**Spanish**	**Portuguese**
yes/no	sí/no	sim/não
please	por favor	se faz favor
thank you (very much)	(muchas) gracias	(muito) obrigada
Good morning	Buenos días	Bom dia
Good afternoon/ evening	Buenas tardes	Boa tarde
Goodnight	Buenas noches	Boa noite
Goodbye/see you later	Adiós/Hasta la vista	Adeus/Até a vista
I don't understand	No comprendo	Não percebo
Do you speak English?	Se habla inglés?	Fala inglês?
How?	Cómo?	Como?
What?	Qué?	(O) Quê?

Where?	Dónde?	Ondé?
When?	Cuándo?	Quando?
Why?	Por qué?	Porquê?
What is that?	Qué es eso?	O que é isso?
How many?	Cuántos, -as?	Quantos, -as?
How much?	Cuánto?	Quanto?
here	aqui	aqui
there	allí	alí, lá
now	ahora	agora
later	más tarde	mais tarde
good	bueno, -a	bom, boa
bad	malo, -a	mau
big	grande	grande
small	pequeño, -a	pequeno, -a
more/less	más/menos	mais/menos
and/with	y/con	e/com
nothing	nada	nada
very	muy	muito
man/lady	señor/señora	senhor/senhora
child	niño, -a	criança (m & f)
also	también	também

Numbers

one	un(o), una	um, uma
two	dos	dois, duas
three	tres	três
four	cuatro	quatro
five	cinco	cinco
six	seis	seis
seven	siete	sete
eight	ocho	oito
nine	nueve	nove
ten	diez	dez
eleven	once	onze
twelve	doce	doze
thirteen	trece	treze
fourteen	quatorce	catorze
fifteen	quince	quinze
sixteen	dieciséis	dezasseis
seventeen	diecisiete	dezassete
eighteen	dieciocho	dezoito
nineteen	diecinueve	dezanove

twenty	veinte	vinte
twenty-one	veintiuno, -a	vinte e um
thirty	treinta	trinta
forty	cuarenta	quarenta
fifty	cincuenta	cinquenta
hundred	cien (to)	cento
one hundred and one	ciento uno, -a	cento e um
five hundred	quinientos, -as	quinhentos
one thousand	mil	mil
first	primero, -a	primeiro
second	segundo, -a	segundo
third	tercero, a	terceiro
fourth	cuarto, -a	quarto
fifth	quinto, -a	quinto
sixth	sexto, -a	sexto

Time

What time is it?	Qué hora es?	Que horas são?
It is two o'clock	Son las dos	São duas horas
It is nine-thirty	Son las nueve y media	São as nove e mei
five minutes	cinco minutos	cinco minutos
morning	mañana	manhã
night	noche	noite
today	hoy	hoje
tomorrow	mañana	amanhã
yesterday	ayer	ontem
month/week/year	mes/semana/año	mês/semano/ano
Sunday	domingo	domingo
Monday	lunes	segunda-feira
Tuesday	martes	terça-feira
Wednesday	miércoles	quarta-feira
Thursday	jueves	quinta-feira
Friday	viernes	sexta-feira
Saturday	sábado	sábado
January	enero	janeiro
February	febrero	fevereiro
March	marzo	março
April	abril	abril
May	mayo	maio
June	junio	junho
July	julio	julho
August	agosto	agosto

September	septiembre	setembro
October	octubre	outubro
November	noviembre	novembro
December	diciembre	dezembro
spring	primavera	primavera
summer	verano	verão
autumn/fall	otoño	outono
winter	invierno	inverno

Travel

port	puerto	porto
ship	buque, barco	navio
airport	aeropuerto	aeroporto
aeroplane	avión	avião
bus	guagua, autocarro	autocarro
taxi/cab	taxi	taxi
first class	de primera clase	de primeira classe
ticket (return)	billete (de ida y vuelta)	bilhete (de ida e volta)
Where is the bus stop?	Dónde está la parada?	Onde é a paragem?
How can I get to. . .?	Como puedo llegar a. . .?	Come se vai para. . .?
When is the next. . .?	Cuándo sale el próximo. . .?	Quando parte o próximo. . .?
How long does the trip take?	Cuánto tiempo dura el viaje?	Quanto tempo leva?
It is very far?	Es muy lejos?	É muito longe?
How much is it?	Cuánto es?	Quanto é?
Can you tell me where to get off for. . .?	Puede decirme dónde bajar para. . .?	Pode dezirme par onde sair para. . .?
We are in a hurry	Tenemos prisa	Temos presa

Driving

car/automobile	coche	carro
petrol/gas	gasolina	gasolina
driver	conductor, chófer	conductor
filling station	estación de servicio	estação de serviço
mechanic	mecánico	mecânico
garage	garaje	garagem
breakdown	avería	panne
road/highway	camino/carretera	estrada
street	calle	rua
square	plaza	praça

corner	esquina	esquina
left/right	izquierda/derecha	esquerda/direita
straight on	adelante, todo seguido	sempre em frente
Where can I hire a. . .?	Dónde puedo alquilar un. . .?	Onde posso alugar um. . .?
Where is the nearest. . .?	Dónde está el. . . más próximo?	Onde é o. . . mais perto?
Fill up the tank	Sírvese llenar el depósito	Enche o depósito
Is this the road for. . .?	Es éste el camino para. . .?	E por acqui caminho para. . .?
Slow down!	Ande más despacio!	Mais devagar!
Stop!	Párese!	Pare!

Road Signs

NB: Most of these are international pictographs, but a few that may require explanation are listed below:

Danger	Peligro	Perigo
Halt/Stop	Alto/Pare	Alto/Pare
No entry	Prohibido el paso	Passagem proibida
Crossroads	Cruce	Encruzilhada
Roadworks	Obras	Obras, Trabalhos
No Parking	Se prohibe estacionar	Estacionamento proibido
Entrance	Entrada	Entrada
Exit	Salida	Saída

Public Notices

Open	Abierto	Aberto
Closed	Cerrado	Encerrado, Fechado
Ladies (WC)	Señoras	Senhoras
Gentlemen (WC)	Caballeros	Homens
Lavatory	Retrete	Aseo
Notice	Aviso	Aviso
Cash desk	Caja	Caixa
Push/Pull	Empujad/Tirad	Empurrar/Puxar
Way In/Exit	Entrada/Salida	Entrada/Saida
No Smoking	Se Prohibe Fumar	Não Fumar
Private Property	Es Propiedad	Casa Particular

Problems

Fire!	Fuego!	Fogo!
Help!	Socorro!	Socorro!

Police	Policía/guardia	Policia/guarda
hospital	hospital	hospital
accident	accidente	acidente
I am ill	me siento enfermo, -a	estou doente
my head hurts	me duele la cabeza	tenho uma dor de cabeça
I have a stomach ache	tenge dolar de estómago	tenho uma dor do estómago
Come in!	Adelante!/Pase!	Entre!
Go away!	Vaya!	Va-se embora!
Can you help me	Puede ayudarme?	Pode ajudar-me?
I am a foreigner	Soy extranjero, -a	Sou estrangeiro, -a
Where is the British Consulate?	Dónde es el consulado británico?	Onde é o consulado británico?
I have lost my...	He perdido mi...	Perdí o meu...
passport	pasaporte	passaporte
handbag/purse	bolso, saco	bolsinha
wallet	cartera	carteira
suitcase	maleta	mala
It's not working	No funciona	Não funciona
I need...	Necesito...	Preciso de...
a doctor	un médico	um médico

Shopping/Sightseeing

bank	el banco	o banco
money	dinero	dinheiro
post office	correos	o correio
shop	la tienda	a loja
chemist	la farmacia	a farmácia
newsagent, tobacconist	el estanco	a tabacaria
cheap	barato, -a	barato, -a
expensive	caro, -a	caro, -a
more/less	más/menos	mais/menos
cigarettes	cigarillos	cigarros
matches	cerillas	fósforos
stamps	sellos	selos
postcards	(tarjetas) postales	(bilhetes) postáis
newspaper (English)	periódico (inglés)	jornal (inglês)
map	mapa	mapa
museum	museo	museu
theatre/cinema	teatro/cine	teatro/cine
church	iglesia	igreja

beach	la playa	a praia
Where can I buy...?	Dónde puedo comprar...?	Onde posso comprar...?
Do you have...?	Tiene...?	Tem...?
How much is it?	Cuánto es?	Quanto é?
I don't like it	No me gusta	Não gosto
I should like...	Quisiera...	Queria...
What time does it open?	A qué hora se abre?	A que hora abre-se?
Can we go in?	Se puede entrar?	Pode-se entrar?

Restaurants and Cafés

meal	la comida	a refeição
breakfast	el desayuno	o pequeno almoço
lunch	el almuerzo	o almoço
dinner	la cena	o jantar
menu	el menú	a ementa
waiter	el camarero	o criado
bill/check	la cuenta	a conta
ashtray	el cenicero	o cinzeiro
dessert	el postre	a sobremesa

On the Menu

hors d'oeuvre	entremeses	hors d'oeuvre
soup	sopa	sopa
omelette	tortilla	omelete
fried eggs	huevos fritos al plato	ovos estrelados
shellfish	**mariscos**	**mariscos**
crab	cangrejo	caranguejo
lobster	langosta	lagosta
prawns	gambas	gambas, lagostins
mussels	mejillones	mexilhões
clams	almejas	ameijoas
oysters	ostras	ostras
fish	**pescado**	**peixe**
cod	bacalao	bacalhau
sole	lenguado	linguado
tuna/tunny	atún	atum
swordfish	pez espada	espadarte
hake	merluza	pescada
sea bass	dorada	dourada
sea bream	besugo	besugo

anchovies	anchoas	anchovas
eels	angulas	enguias
octopus	pulpo	polvo
squid	calamares	lulas
meat/poultry	**carne/aves**	**carne/aves**
beef	carne de vaca	carne de vaca
steak	filete	bife
veal	ternera	vitela
pork	cerdo	porco
lamb	cordero	borrego
sausage (spiced)	chorizo	chouriço
meatballs	albóndigas	almôdegas
stew	estofado	guisado
chops	chuletas	costeletas
roast	asado	assado
fried	frito	frito
ham	jamón	fiambre
chicken	pollo	frango
duck	pato	pato
rabbit	conejo	coelho
vegetables	**legumbres**	**legumes**
potatoes	papas/patatas	batasas
onion	cebolla	cebola
garlic	ajo	alho
cabbage	col	couve
celery	apio	aipo
carrot	zanahoria	cenoura
beans (french)	judías	feijões
asparagus	espárrago	espargo
rice	arroz	arroz
aubergine/eggplant	berenjena	beringela
spinach	espinaca	espinafre
peas	guisantes	ervilhas
mushrooms	setas	cogumelos
salad	**ensalada**	**salada**
lettuce	lechuga	alface
tomato	tomate	tomate
cucumber	pepino	pepino
peppers	pimientos	pimentos
olives	aceitunas	azeitunas
oil (olive)	aceite	azeite
vinegar	vinagre	vinagre

fruit/dessert	**frutas/postre**	**frutas/sobremesa**
apple	manzana	maçã
orange	naranja	laranja
pear	pera	pera
banana	banana	banana
melon	melón	melão
watermelon	sandía	melancia
pineapple	ananás	ananaz
grapes	uvas	uvas
apricots	albaricoques	alperces
plums	ciruelas	ameixas
raspberries	frambuesas	framboesas
strawberries	fresas	morangos
peach	melocotón	pêssego
icecream	helado	flã
cake/biscuits	torta/galletas	bolo/bolachas
cheese	queso	queijo
Miscellaneous		
bread	pan	pão
butter	mantequilla	manteiga
(mineral) water	agua (mineral)	água (mineral)
ice	hielo	gelo
wine	vino	vinho
brandy	coñac	brandy
salt/pepper	sal/pimienta	sal/pimenta
coffee (black)	café sólo	café
coffé con leche	café com leite	
tea	té	chá
milk	leche	leite
sugar	azúcar	açúcar
lemon	limón	limão
sandwich	bocadillo	sanduíche
toast	tostado	torrada

Appendix II
Conversion Tables

All the islands in this book use the metric system of weights and measures.

1. Linear Measures

1 millimetre	— 0.039 inches	1 inch	— 2.54 centimetres
1 centimetre	— 0.3937 inches	1 foot	— 0.3048 metres
1 metre	— 39.37 inches	1 yard	— 0.9144 metres
1 kilometre	— 0.621 miles	1 mile	— 1.60934 kilometres

2. Measures of Weight

1 gram	— 0.035 ounces	1 ounce	— 28.35 grams
1 kilogram	— 2.205 pounds	1 pound	— 0.454 kilograms

3. Measures of Liquid Capacity

(a) British

1 litre	— 1.76 pints	1 pint	— 0.568 litres
1 litre	— 0.22 gallons	1 gallon	— 4.546 litres

(b) American

1 litre	— 2.11 pints	1 pint	— 0.473 litres
1 litre	— 0.26 gallons	1 gallon	— 3.785 litres

4. Tyre Pressures

lb per sq in:	10	12	15	18	20	23	26	28	30	33	36	40
kg per sq cm:	0.7	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.8

5. Temperature

To convert Centigrade into Fahrenheit: multiply by 9, divide by 5, and add 32.

To convert Fahrenheit into centigrade: subtract 32, multiply by 5 and divide by 9.

6. Clothing and Shoe Size

Women's dresses

British/US	10	12	14	16	18
Continental	40	42	44	46	48

Mens Suits and Overcoats

British/US	36	38	40	42	44
Continental	46	48	50	52	54

Men's shirts

British/US	14	15	16	17	18
Continental	36	37	41	43	45

Shoes

British/US	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Continental	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

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From the sophisticated pleasures of Las Palmas in the Canaries to the sandy beaches of Porto Santo in the Madeira Archipelago and the unspoilt beauty of the Azores, this book is an invaluable guide to the Atlantic Islands – both on and off the beaten track.

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